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AFP Photo/Dave Martin/Pool

**On the Cover**

Members of a U.S. Marine reconnaissance team return to Camp Rhino in southern Afghanistan following their mission near Kandahar. ... See story on page 32.

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Reuters/Pool/Joel Marquette



Mike Winchester

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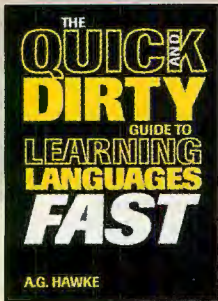


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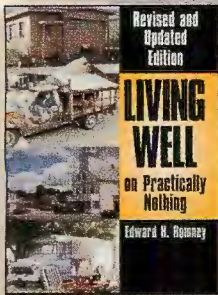
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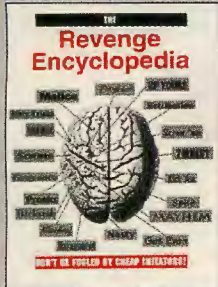
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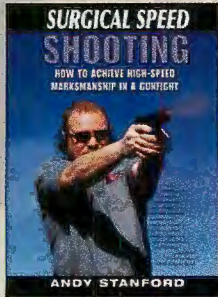
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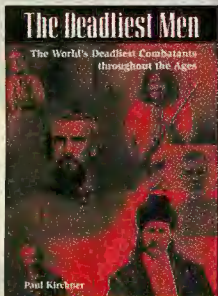
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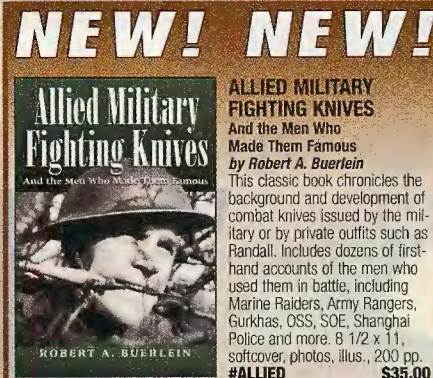
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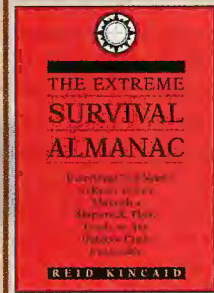
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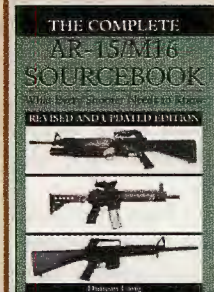
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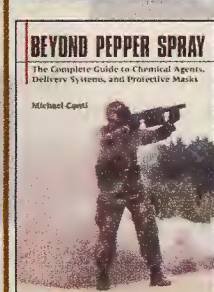
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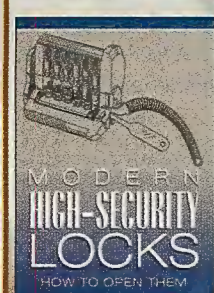
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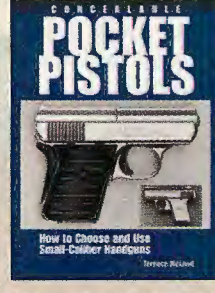
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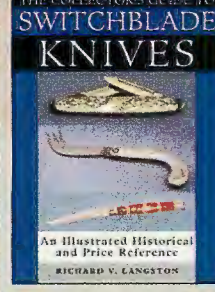
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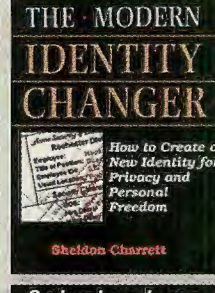
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# Command Guidance

BY JACK WHEELER

## Did We Let Him Escape On Purpose?

There is an irresistibly intriguing rumor making the rounds on Capitol Hill today. It is that the Pentagon and the CIA could have nailed Osama bin Laden in Tora Bora last week, but let him escape instead. Why would they do such a thing? "A Twofer Payback" is the answer.

Let's draw up a list of prospective countries to where OBL might run, places anarchic or insanely hubristic enough to provide him on-the-lam shelter. There are five.

**Somalia** — What better justification, what better opportunity, could there be to payback the Somalian savages who killed 18 U.S. peacekeeping soldiers and dragged several of their bodies through the streets of Mogadishu in 1993, than if OBL escaped to Somalia? There have got to vast legions of folks in the U.S. military who are right now praying, "If he got away, please let him get away to Somalia."

**Iraq** — GW is working overtime to create a rationale for going after Saddam, and getting our European allies behind it. If Saddam were fool enough to take OBL in, no more rationale is needed. The BLU-82 Daisy Cutters and GBU-28 Bunker Busters start dropping tomorrow.

**Iran** — While it seems unlikely the mullahs would help and hide OBL, his presence and the massive U.S. military strike against it would immediately precipitate a national uprising. Iran is a desiccated tinderbox, ready at any moment to burst into flames of revolutionary revenge against the mullahs. OBL's fleeing to Iran would be the catalyst for con-

version of Iran from theocratic tyranny to secular pro-West democracy.

**Saudi** — OBL's ultimate fantasy is to become the Ayatollah Khomeini of Saudi Arabia. He has strong support by the ultra-puritanical Wahabis, the Islamic sect that financially sponsored the Taliban and are now dedicated to purging Mohammed's sacred homeland of the corrupt Saudi Royal Family. The Wahabis providing sanctuary to Osama, and trying to instigate a civil war thereby, would give the Saudi Royals, backed by US firepower, the excuse they need to wipe them out for good.

**Pakistan** — As anyone who has traveled through the Pushtun area of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan knows, the Pak government exercises diaphanously nominal control over it. If a Pushtun tribe with more hubris than brains gives OBL sanctuary, it is the pretext for the Pakistani military — still dominated by Punjabis who despise the Pushtuns — with US firepower to establish sovereignty over their entire country and end the endemic anarchy.

There is simply no way for Osama bin Laden to vanish in obscurity. These five countries seem to be the only conceivable places to where he might attempt escaping. There are quite beneficial consequences for the US should he do so for any of the five. Thus the rumor. It may be nothing more. The possibility of a Twofer Payback has, nonetheless, a magnetic appeal.

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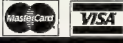
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# Bulletin Board

## Prowling and Jamming in Afghanistan

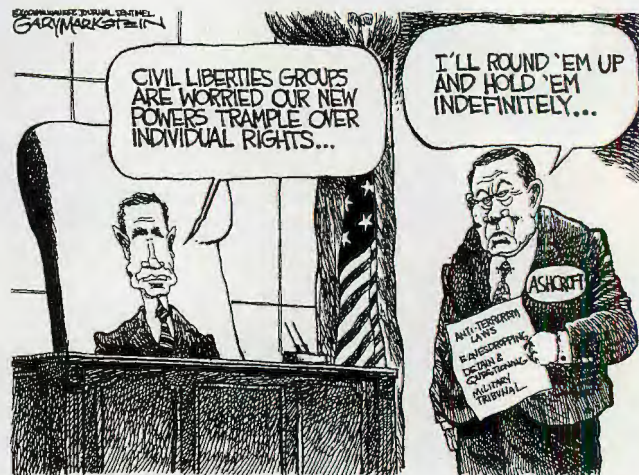
Achieving air superiority in Afghanistan took allied forces about a mission and a half, as the Taliban's air force was mostly caught on the ground. The "half" comprised sorties aimed at knocking out what AA capability existed — locating and zapping missile sites and radar-controlled guns. The speed with which this was accomplished was due in largest part to the efficiency with which our forces went about our work, and to a lesser degree due to the fact air defenses had been neglected by a regime whose primary domestic interest lay in subjugating its own population. This left the Navy's EA-6B Prowlers with not a lot to do in the electronic warfare arena until their mission statement was modified to include disruption of ground-to-ground radio traffic — crucial comms for the Taliban in a country where the infrastructure had been battered by war for the last two decades.

## Recreational Phony Busting

Exposing those who did not have the guts to go in harm's way, but would steal the credit from those who did honorably serve, is like cleaning the mice out of your sleeping bag: soon as you get rid of one nest, another moves in. Fortunately, those who are good at busting the phonies have made it easier for those who are not, to access their expertise. If the frauds knew how efficiently they can be exposed, they might retreat to the safe harbors of honesty, but in the mean time there are the good guys like SOF contributors Larry Bailey and Steve Waterman methodically spreading industrial-strength truth around, and they're there to help others do the same. Especially when it involves phony SEALs. You can e-mail Bailey at [larrywb@compuserve.com](mailto:larrywb@compuserve.com) or you can contact Waterman at [Steve@justasailor.com](mailto:Steve@justasailor.com). They both are part of the team at [www.cyberseals.org](http://www.cyberseals.org) which may also be reached at P.O. Box 310, North Collins, NY 14111 if you have a tip or a question.

With a broader focus and an on-line Phony Veteran Buster's Kit is [www.phonyveterans.com](http://www.phonyveterans.com). Their web site has on-line instructions for checking the veracity of people's claims regarding their military service, with hyperlinks to federal agencies, downloadable forms and step-by-step advice — even points of contact for reliable and reasonable commercial investigators who can be of service to fill in the gaps in the event you do not have all the necessary information to request records directly from government offices.

Phony veterans beware: the military archivists never forget, and the Truth Squad never sleeps.



## Putin Disappointed With Clinton Antiterrorist Activity

In an interview with Barbara Walters on 20/20, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that "the former president of the United States...was in a very difficult position. But even at that time, we certainly were counting on a more active cooperation in combating international terrorism... I don't know whether it would have been possible to prevent these strikes on the United States by the terrorists, but it was a pity that our special services didn't get the information on time and warn the American people and the American political leadership about the tragedy that came to pass."

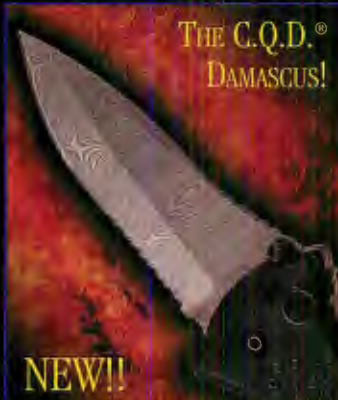
## Retirees Can Apply As Air Marshals

Thanks to the efforts of Sen. John Ensign (R-Nev.), the Aviation and Transportation Security Act signed by President Bush includes an age waiver that would allow retiring GIs and other service personnel over the age of 40 to go into the Federal Air Marshal Program. Under previous FAA rules, the age cutoff was 40, but one of the new ATSA missions is to dramatically expand the number of air marshals trained and available, so that a federal officer is aboard every long distance flight that enters or is launched from the USA, and when possible that every passenger flight carries an air marshal. Realizing that the average GI is hardly worn out by age 40, the new law specifically was written to take advantage of the number of retirees, who represent a real pool of talent that has already been trained to be familiar with dislocation and hardship, is familiar with ordnance and already knows the meaning of danger and duty.



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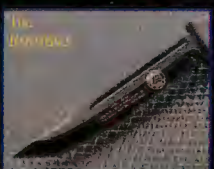
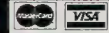
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Applications are being take on-line at <http://jobs.faa.gov>. Applicants who pass the physical and psychological screening are sent to an FAA training facility in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Pat scale runs from \$35,100 to \$80,800 a year, plus the potential for up to 25% more in special federal law-enforcement pay, and locality pay based on their duty location.

## Abusing the First and Second Amendments...

The *New York Times* says it could be one of the worst academic scandals in years: the book *Arming America* by Michael A. Bellesiles, purporting to be an exhaustive research and analysis of early American records that indicated private gun ownership in early America was, in truth, a relatively rare thing. Any student of arms history and technology would have said "hogwash" on the face of such a ridiculous and demonstrably wrong assertion, but it was good enough for academia, the book winning the [heretofore] prestigious Bancroft Prize in American History and Diplomacy. Now, notes the *Times*, "many of Mr. Bellesiles' defenders have gone silent. Over the past year a number of scholars who have examined his sources say he has seriously misused historical records and possibly fabricated them. They say the outcome, when all the evidence is in, could be one of the worst academic scandals in years." Bellisiles was "well on his way to becoming an academic superstar," says the *Times*, but now "it is not clear what will happen" to Mr. Bellisiles or his book if the scholarly community reaches a consensus that *Arming America* is a seriously flawed or even fraudulent book.

Among myriad demonstrably false claims were that he had researched probate records in the San Francisco Superior Court starting in the 1850s, to learn that relatively few guns ever showed up in estates, ergo there were few guns there. Unfortunately, such records were all destroyed in the 1906 earthquake — something any pea-brain, even a highly scholarly pea-brain — should have thought of before fantasizing into his word processor. Wonder if he ever thought of contacting the arms makers, who still retain production records reflecting millions of arms made and sold domestically.

## Poll: Chiefs Favor Concealed Carry Laws

A recent survey by the National Association of Chiefs of Police found that more than 60% of U.S. police chiefs and sheriffs favor a national system allowing law-abiding citizens to carry concealed firearms.

The survey asked 23,113 chiefs and sheriffs if a national concealed handgun carry permit system would reduce rates of violent crime: 61% of those surveyed said yes. Also according to the survey, 93% of the top cops believed law-abiding citizens should be able to purchase a firearm for sport or self-defense. Some 96% were of the opinion that criminals are able to obtain any weapon they want, laws notwithstanding, and 94% believed that active duty or retired police officers should be allowed to carry a firearm from state to state. Further, 69% opposed laws limiting law-abiding purchasers to one gun per month — and some 90% said they expected foreign or domestic acts of violence will increase in the United States in the coming year.

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wheelchair, paralyzed from the waist down. In addition to the TEC-9 "assault" pistol used in the shooting by Graham, other illegal firearms were found at Graham's home. The Million Moms have repeatedly stated they want every city in America to have guns laws like Washington, DC - so we hope they're now happy.

## Million-Mom Marcher Marches to Prison on Weapons, Attempted Murder Charges

Barbara Graham and Erskine Moorer of Million-Mom-March fame have both been convicted in Federal Superior Court of Assault With Intent to Kill While Armed, Aggravated Assault While Armed, Mayhem While Armed, three counts each of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Crime of Violence and other related gun charges. The charges stem from their assault and repeated shooting of an innocent (and misidentified) man named Kikko Smith, who as a result of the shooting is confined to a

## G.I. Geraldo, Combat Reporter

Those watching Fox News Channel have been subjected to a new "war correspondent" in the unlikely person of former talk-show host Geraldo Rivera. According to NewsMax and other sources, Pvt. Geraldo has had a tough time getting near any action — reportedly Fox asked one of their real war correspondents, Ollie North, to intercede with the brass over there to get Geraldo close to the troops for a story — and North had to bring back the message that Rivera's "papers were not in order, wouldn't be in order until after the conflict."

This has left Geraldo filing reports about his daily routine and living conditions — what he ate, the rough sleeping conditions, and so on. Thus far as close as he has gotten to the action is running around with a few local "fighters" obviously not-otherwise-occupied. Noted NewsMax, "They have three tanks, and these ragtag fighters seem to act as extras for today's version of Geraldo Plays Soldier."

Referring to the mountains where Bin Laden et al are presumed to be holed up as "the rat's nest," Rivera seems to be fond of saying ominously "we have to go in there and kill the rats." ✕

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## Men On A Mission Fight To Keep The Warrior Spirit

BY MAX BOOT

*The Marines have landed.*

Those very words inspire confidence, and well they should, for the Marines have developed a reputation as some of the toughest fighting men in the U.S. armed forces.

Doubters — and there are many, particularly in competing services — scoff that the Marine aura is a triumph of image over reality. The Corps, they argue, is neither heavy enough for sustained ground operations nor light enough for commando raids. It is a source of constant consternation for the other services to see themselves outmaneuvered by the Marines in the battle for congressional support, leading to cracks about how the “Marines are best at storming Capitol Hill.”

There is no denying that the Marines have devoted a great deal of energy to burnishing their image. They've had to. Ever since the Corps' birth in 1775, it has been the tar-

get of attempts to eliminate it. The Marines have responded by cultivating the American people, whether through their famous band (once led by John Philip Sousa) or through movies like “The Sands of Iwo Jima.” It will surprise no one familiar with the Corps that the first reporters allowed to accompany U.S. troops into action in Afghanistan were brought in by the Marines.

Yet it would be wrong to think that the Corps' reputation is mainly the product of slick PR work. I remember sitting in a classroom at the Naval War College a few years ago with students from all four services. The Air Force, Army and Navy officers present all lamented that their services had lost focus since the Cold War; between peacekeeping assignments and sexual-discrimination training, they no longer knew what their mission was. The lone Marine officer present offered a striking contrast. He knew his job —

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to fight, and if necessary kill, the enemy — and remained confident that there would be as much call for his skills in 2000 as in 1800.

To put it another way, the Marines have done a better job of instilling, and preserving, a warrior ethos than the other services. During a visit earlier this year to Camp Lejeune, the Marines' main East Coast expeditionary base, a grizzled infantry colonel complained to me that the Corps had gone soft. Why, his men were sleeping in dormitory-style apartments, not in open squad bays! But the other services have made far greater accommodations to modern American mores.

The Marines alone segregate the sexes during basic training, and they put the emphasis on preparing for combat above all, as exemplified by their slogan, "Every Marine a rifleman." You can see the difference in something as trivial as a haircut: In the other services, most officers sport hair that's almost as long as a civilian's, while even the most senior Marine generals maintain a crew cut that would do a recruit proud. To outsiders, this can make the Marines appear to be cultish, abnormal, even frightening. That is precisely the point: Normal people don't go to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban.

The Marines won their greatest glory in two major wars: World War I produced the memorable nickname "devil dogs," and World War II the iconic image of the flag raising at Iwo Jima. But the Marines have an even longer track record at the kinds of low-intensity operations that they are now undertaking in Afghanistan.

Between 1800 and 1934 the Marines landed abroad 180 times. Whether battling Haitian cacos (1915-20) or Nicaraguan Sandinistas (1927-33), they showed a flair for counter-guerrilla warfare matched by few of their compatriots

in the more staid services. To take only one example: Marine Sgt. Herman Hanneken and Cpl. William Button darkened their bodies in order to pass as Haitians and infiltrate the camp of the leading anti-American rebel. Leading their own phony band of locally recruited "revolutionaries," they managed to kill Charlemagne Peralte and helped end the revolt.

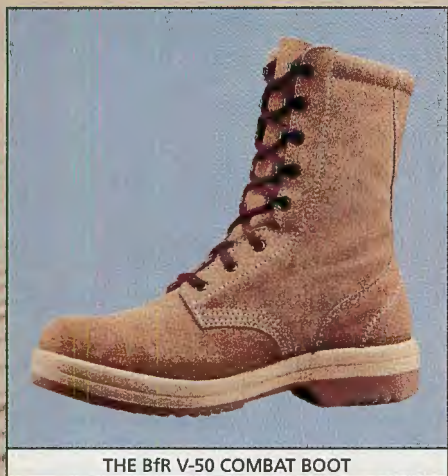
This is not a tactic likely to be found in any operations manual, but this kind of improvisation comes naturally to the Marines, who push initiative and responsibility down to the lowest ranks. The Corps' organizational structure reflects its flexibility. Marine Expeditionary Units can be formed quickly by drawing on infantry, air power, artillery, armor — whatever is right for the job at hand, whether that means delivering relief supplies to a devastated Third World country or rescuing American diplomats from a besieged embassy.

The Army, organized in a divisional structure that has changed little since Napoleonic days, is racing to catch up. Many of the Army's heavier units have been of little use in post-Cold War assignments. M-1 Abrams tanks, for instance, were too heavy to traverse the bridges leading into Bosnia. Gen. Eric Shinseki, the Army chief of staff, has recognized the problem and has formed a medium-weight brigade designed to respond to emergencies within 96 hours.

Some Marine officers look askance at this development, worried that the Army will try to usurp their role. If history is any guide, they have little to fear. America will always need "a few good men."

*Mr. Boot is The Wall Street Journal's editorial features editor.*

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# Maximus Bush

BY JACK WHEELER

**AS** America's victory in Afghanistan unfolds, what keeps coming up for me are the opening scenes of the movie "Gladiator." The barbarians, dressed in skins, have thrown the decapitated head of the Roman peace negotiator at the Romans' feet, and are jumping up and down in a maniacal, murderous frenzy. The Roman General, Maximus, calmly reaffirms with his commanders their most cherished values — "strength and honor" — and then quietly orders: "At my signal, unleash hell." In the war on Moslem terrorism being waged today, George W. Bush has become America's Maximus.

By contrast, and only for a moment as any longer risks nausea, try imagining the state America would be in if the atrocity of September 11 had been committed under a Clinton or Gore presidency. The voices of the Left would rise unchecked to claim America somehow deserved it, we would be sinking into a quicksand of demoralized gloom, the economy would have no hope of recovery and the thousands of human beings slaughtered at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon would have died in vain. Maximus Bush in the White House insures that those thousands have not died in vain.

The tens of thousands of orphaned children, widows, widowers and grieving friends of the victims can take solace in the fact that the death of their loved ones is not only being avenged, but is directly causing a re-flowering of what has made America good and great, and a cleansing of the social poisons so damaging to America's cultural health.

The cesspools of multiculturalist-diversity-feminazi-"hey hey ho ho, Western Civ has got to go" antiglobalist-antiamerican political correctness lunacy are being washed away in a sea of American flags. The most miasmatic of these cesspools are on our college campuses, and in them kids are rebelling against their old-fogey professors who still hold tightly to retrograde resentments toward Western Civilization.

This would not be happening if a Clinton or Gore responded to the atrocity by lobbing a few ineffectual cruise missiles (Monica Missiles) at OBL, sat around wringing their hands afraid to do anything serious lest "the whole Moslem world be against us," and the rest of America sat cowering in fear of the next terrorist assault. This is what OBL expected of us. He expected GW to be no different from a Bill Clinton or Al Gore. As Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator would say, "Big mistake."

Yes, the "world has changed," as we constantly hear, since September 11. Yet the change has been caused not by the attack on America, but by America's reaction to it. The source of that reaction is Maximus Bush unswervingly deciding to unleash hell upon the attackers. My friend Peggy Noonan has just written a marvelous book about Ronald Reagan entitled, *When Character Was King*. Peggy may now be wishing she had given it another title - because character, which certainly disappeared from American politics in the 1990s, is back, big time, with GW. The man of character and integrity, the man who says what he means and means what he says, is the man leftwing intellectuals hate and fear the most. That's why they hated and feared John Wayne and Ronald Reagan, and why they loved and defended the antithesis of those virtues, Bill Clinton. Now, at one of America's darkest moments, there appears at her helm a man of those virtues, committed without apology to exterminat-

ing the threat posed by her enemies.

OBL was not the only one to gravely misjudge GW. Millions of Moslems, from Cairo to Jakarta, cheered the attack on America. Tens of thousands of young Moslem men around the world proclaimed Jihad Against America and announced their intention to go to Afghanistan to fight on the side of their Taliban brothers. Thousands of Pakistani men actually did so, streaming across the border into Afghanistan with a Kalashnikov in their hands and a chant of "Death to America" on their lips. Their fate was to receive their martyr's death via a Daisy Cutter or other American ordnance, flee frightened out of their wits back to Pakistan, or lie captured in some anti-Taliban jail whimpering to Western reporters how they "just want to go home."

The cheering on the "Arab Street" is no more. The Taliban are toast. The mass demonstrations waving OBL posters have all but vanished. Nobody loves a loser — and George W. Maximus Bush has made a loser out of Osama Bin Laden. The human being still has much in common with the wolf, our main competitor for pre-historic eons in the same ecological niche: hunting big animals in packs. When two alpha wolves fight, the rest of the pack stays out until they see who will be the winner: then they pounce on the loser. Watch now how many in the Moslem world will pounce on OBL.

You get one guess as to who is the most nervous man in the world right now. It's not OBL, who knows his fate is sealed. Right: it's Saddam Hussein. The path has been cleared, the targeting has been announced (by Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, completely ignoring the pathetic protestations of Powell's State Department). Saddam is next. The Arab/Moslem world will not attempt to stand in the way of his destruction. With Saddam gone, the world will pick up the clarion call for Arab/Moslem democracy. First to heed it will be Iran. A secular democracy similar to Turkey's will be the intended goal for all Islamic countries.

Would you hazard to guess what is the most nervous country in the world now? A good candidate would be China. GW is engineering what may be a for-real actual alliance between the United States and Russia — and thanks to it, Russia may pull itself out of its abyss and prosper. A for-real, actual alliance may also emerge between the United States and India — with Indian naval might counterbalancing China. A U.S.-Russia-India alliance would be a total nightmare for the Chicoms. Especially when their economy is flirting with collapse, as the world figures out that their productivity claims are a charade.

Of course the War on Moslem Terrorism is not yet over — but now we can see that, whatever trials lay ahead, it will be won. It is thanks to GW that America, Western Civilization, and the world in general, will emerge out of this horrible tragedy stronger and safer than it was before. It will also emerge more prosperous, as democratic capitalism will be more secure to flourish. Thanks to Maximus Bush, America has a leader of character and integrity — of strength and honor — who has seared into her enemies' brains the Texas message writ global: DMWA. Don't Mess With America.

—Jack Wheeler is director of the Freedom Research Foundation. ✂

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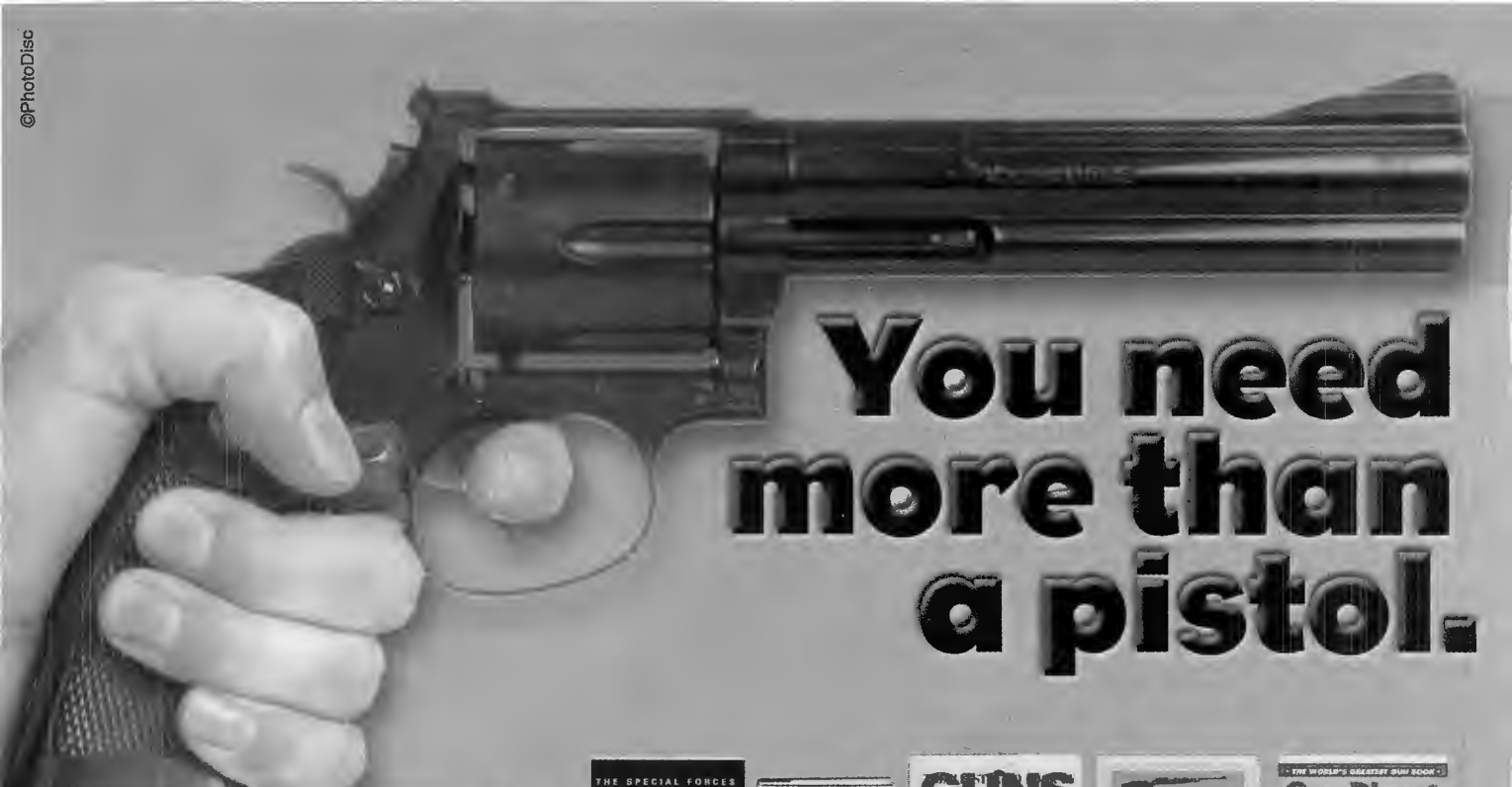


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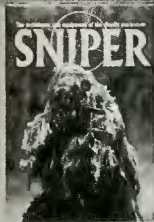
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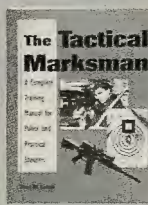
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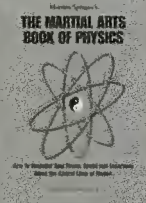
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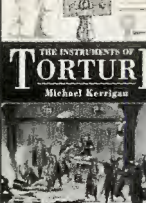
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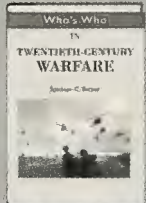
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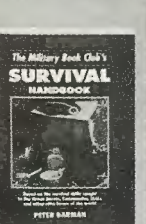
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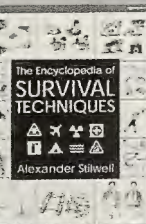
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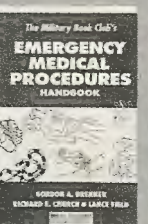
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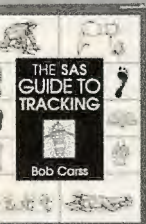
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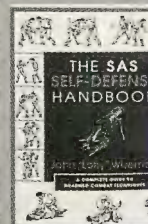
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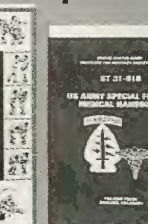
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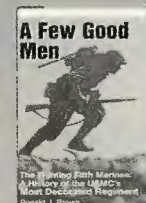
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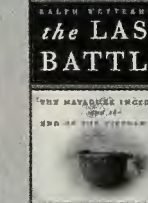
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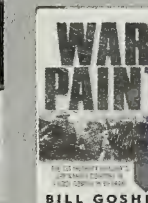
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# flak



## We're Bagging The Bag

I am writing to inform you of a problem with the plastic envelopes that your company is now mailing the issues of *Soldier Of Fortune* in. They keep falling apart in the mail!

I am enclosing the latest one (I received for you to see. It is in the exact condition which I received it. I did not open it at all. As you can see both ends and most of the middle seam are split open. Fortunately this time the magazine was still there barely hanging on inside.

This was not the case last month. Last month I received only the plastic bag with one end split open and a note of apology from the post office. I notified your subscription department who promptly sent me another copy (in a paper bag) for which I am grateful.

Whoever came up with the idea of these plastic bags should re-think the idea. They are very badly designed.

I have been a subscriber of *Soldier Of Fortune* since the first issue. It's the greatest magazine there is. I hate missing an issue.

Lawrence Theurer  
Lansdale, Penna.

Thanks for your comments. We have had a large number of similar complaints and, therefore, are no longer shipping SOF in plastic bags. It was a good idea, poorly executed. — RKB

## Tunnel Tactics



The New Tunnel Warfare: A common error in tactics and strategy is employing the strategy and tactics of the last conflict. Let's not do that in the Afghan tunnels. Sending individual sol-

diers with M16s and flashlights gives up all of our tactical and strategic advantages. Casualties are assured and victory is not. Instead, *set the tunnels on fire*. The fires are still burning at the WTC. Let's use the same tactic on Osama. Locate the tunnels, reduce the immediate resistance and then have the engineers bring in drums of Av-gas or tank fuel. Get the drums in as far as possible and then light them up with incendiary grenades or whatever is handy. Filling the tunnels with smoke and fire makes them very user unfriendly. If enough smoke can be generated other entrances and vents can be located. After a good smoking, seal them up. If Osama never sees the light of day again I won't be shedding any tears. Let's be smart: Let the poor SOBs die for their cause instead of sending in our guys using a stupid tactic.

Paul D. King  
Via e-mail

*The strategy you outline worked in the Pacific Islands during WWII, however the tunnel complexes to be dealt with in Afghanistan are an order of magnitude larger and more complex, more comparable to the extensive underground installations and transport nets in Germany during WWII. But, a well-supplied siege always wins. If they retreat to the tunnel complexes they are self-contained, and it's only a matter of time. If they choose not to come out, that's their problem. We have no need to occupy the tunnels. The options of the forces on the outside are many — those of the rats inside, only two: Give up or die in place.*

## Priority For Terrorists

I came across the following in an essay by Julie Sirrs in the current *National Interest* ... I think this little quote says all we need to hear:

*Yet disaffected Pashtuns have been unable to overthrow the Taliban for a variety of reasons. For instance, when the Taliban take over an area, they make it a top priority to disarm the population.*

I guess this makes Rosie, Barbara, and all the rest of those liberal fanatics who want to deprive us of our right to keep and bear arms the spiritual sisters of the Taliban!

R. Burgos  
Via e-mail

## Address Went Over The Mountain



International Specialized Book Service, U.S. distributor for Les Grau's *The Bear Went Over the Mountain* that deals with the Soviet military experience in Afghanistan, advises that their new address (due to a change in the local postal numbering) is: ISBS, 5824 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213-3644.

## FLAK For Hack

Hack hit the nail on the head again! When I started duty with my National Guard unit on September 11<sup>th</sup> I was issued a loaded magazine that I wasn't allowed to insert into the weapon and sent to protect an airfield. I was later given Federal orders and am currently performing guard duty with an M-9 pistol that has one 10-round magazine and an empty chamber! It was ironic that I locked up a case of 5.56 and a case of 9mm, in addition to several firearms, to come up here and protect my life with an empty chamber. By the way, I am a police officer on the civilian side!

Name Withheld

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It is a subset of Dominate Process Systems™ released in part to the United States Navy SEALs in 1988 under the project name SCARS. Its purpose was to set a standard above all known fighting systems of hand-to-weapon combat. The results were above and beyond what the US military expected. It was tested, officially approved and implemented.

## ARE MARTIAL ARTS USED IN THE MILITARY?

Absolutely, and they are effective programs for teaching confidence and coordination building skills along with limited defensive skills.

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## IS SCARS STILL IN USE?

Yes!

## WHERE?

In various branches of the Specops community and within deployed NATO troops.

## CAN THE PUBLIC ACCESS SCARS?

Yes, it was declassified in part and exposed to the public in 1993, under the name Hostile Control for non-lethal use. It was later combined with more lethal information under the name of SCARS IQS.

SCARS IQS was put together from archive information from the original Military SCARS Project to form a complete system for the public so they could possess both non-lethal and lethal fighting skills to protect themselves in the real world of street crime.

IQS Level-I is broken down into several study and training videos just like the SEALs program, covering every aspect of conflict, all weapons, guns, knives, clubs. The IQS Level-II covers ground fighting using the system of compression geometry.

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## Lacquer And Language



I was truly surprised by your coverage of Wolf Ammunition in the October issue. Like you I had heard that Wolf ammo was quality ammunition with a lot of bang for the buck. But I will no longer shoot it in my Bushmaster. My reason is a posted warning on the Olympic Arms website to the effect that lacquer coated ammunition can foul the action to the point the rifle will not work. The same website warning said that steel cased ammo was bad for the bore. Their opinion appears to come from weapons returned for warranty repair. In the absence of better information, I will continue to refrain from using Wolf ammunition as well as all other lacquer coated ammunition until I have better information to the contrary. I look forward to your opinion on this matter.

Further, I would like to draw your attention to the article OKC: *From Bank Robbers to Bombers?* The authors J.D. Cash and Roger Charles made the all too common error of referring to

Richard "Wild Bill" Guthrie as well as white supremacists, skinheads, and Aryans as the "far right." This is an error, since politically, communists, fascists, socialists and liberals run the gamut from left of center to far left. Lately the media have taken to referring [to] these groups as right wing extremists in a deliberate effort to cover their political rear ends by obscuring their own political leanings. I am surprised your magazine made the same error. I believe if you check any major political dictionary you will find I am correct.

Thank you,  
J. Islinger

Having had very good results with the Wolf ammunition in the SOF tests, and having fired a truckload of old ComBloc, new Eastern- and Central-European, WW II German and U.S. G.I. lacquered steel-case loads over the years with no problem, we checked out the Olympic Arms website, but I'm not sure from what you say that we read the same website: They make no mention at all of any problem with Wolf ammo fouling the action or that Wolf ammo was bad for the bore. What they did say, was that their chambers are on the tight end of the SAMMI

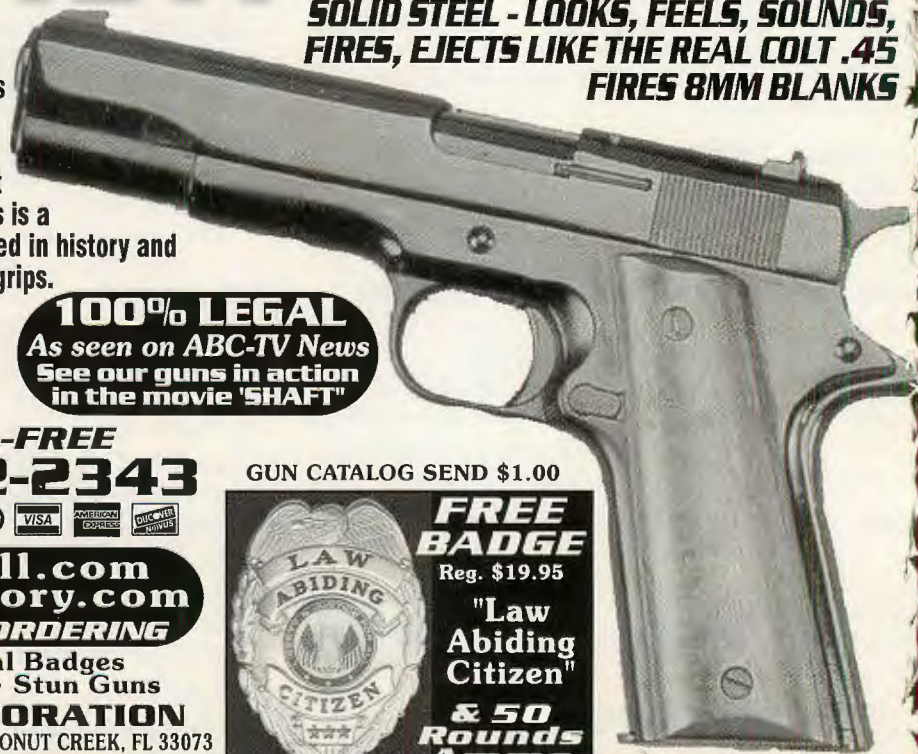
specs in a quest for accuracy, and that when the chambers get hot during sustained fire, the ammo's lacquer coating tends to melt off in the chamber, build up and then solidify when it cools, resulting in malfunctions. They warn of eventual damage to the chamber from either brass or steel cases that are lacquer coated, we would guess from someone taking extraordinary or abrasive steps to clean out the gummed chambers. No mention was made of damage to the bore from steel cases, a scenario which we would consider unlikely since the steel case does not contact the bore unless you somehow manage to fire the rounds backward. They also mention ammo problems with other brands such as Winchester, and in almost any instance, we'd take to heart what a given manufacturer has to say about the feeding of their arms. If I had a Bushmaster, I'd contact them for advice, as they will be the clearinghouse for their own experience and what their customers have found regarding different types or makes of ammo.

No real need to draw our attention to the Cash/Charles article, as we are familiar with it, having read it during the editing process. We do not ordinarily quibble semantics, but since we stand accused of error permit us to review the origins of

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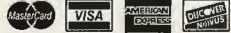


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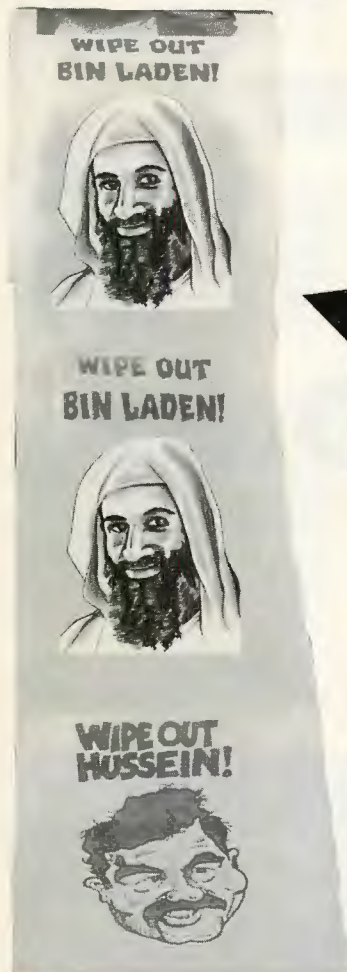
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the rather amorphous terms "right" and "left": When, as coined, they referred to the parliamentarians who wanted change sitting on the "left" and those who wanted to preserve the status quo sitting on the "right" in the various European chambers, the terms meant something. In the intervening century or so, however, instead of evolving into more precise terms they have been used so commonly as epithets they have lost their rather narrow meaning — and as you imply the closer you get to the extremes of the political spectrum the more the same the "right" and "left" are. In the context of the story, and in the general context, when one refers to a political extremist as "right" or "left" it refers to the direction they struck out when they went tangential — the point where they ended up notwithstanding. Don't know if they are major enough for you, but we consulted all the dictionaries in the house, and regretfully, we did not find that you were correct. But then, they were probably also written by people covering their own rear ends by obscuring their own political leanings.

### Kudos For Comus



I would like to thank Mr. Steve Comus for his article on the 1891 Argentine Mauser; It shed great light upon one I have had in my gun cabinet for years.

I've spent many useless days trying to find info about it on the net, but only came away wanting more. I have the Model 1891 carbine, and can only find some very expensive rounds made by Norma for it. His article could very well have me firing this great little rifle again soon. Thanks again, Mr. Comus.

SSG Norris  
Ft. Bragg, NC

### Tony's Taliban?

I am a 25-year old UK citizen of Hungarian descent, a former special constable and the first UK subject (military or civilian) to train at Blackwater Lodge and Training Centre. Firstly I would like to extend my sympathies to U.S. and affiliate citizens whom have suffered at the hands of the extremist violence of recent years.

I would like to make a brief comment regarding another aspect of extremism that has been largely ignored by your



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media, yet has the potential for similar or worse devastation in the near future.

This extremism I refer to is the liberal elite, un-elected group of bastards that have taken over the UK and government. These people have turned a formerly great country into a cesspool. They have removed free debate, the right to defend yourself and your family. They have levied ridiculous laws regarding the ownership of firearms and other weapons.

The U.K. now is little better than a Third World dictatorship. Gang rapes are rife, criminal thugs are free to roam, vandalize property and assault law-abiding citizens because the law protects them. Illegal gun crime increased dramatically after the handgun law.

The U.K. protects and harbours Middle East terrorists, providing them with generous social security payouts. Their recent anti-terrorism legislation is a sham.

U.S. citizens must protect themselves from a fate virtually as bad as Taliban extremism.

(Name Withheld)

### Pro What?

I agree with your statements in what SOF is all about (especially about being pro-military. I am and always have been very proud of America's military), except for one: With all the bad news that we live under today, gotta love the new terrorism bill that completely terrorizes the 4th Amendment. How can you say that you are pro-police? It is now legal for "them" to read this e-mail and decide that I fit the very vague description of a terrorist.

Terry Weimer  
Via e-mail

We're pro-police, not pro-Police State. Check the lead editorial piece in the December issue, relating to the dangers of knee-jerk legislation springing from a desire to protect the country from terrorism. Keep in mind that police do not write laws, they are merely duty-bound to enforce them. If there's a bad law that gets passed, complain to the politicians, not the cop on the beat. Better yet, keep an eye on the politicians, so they don't pass bad laws. And keep in contact with the politicians so they know you're watching — and voting.

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# American Sniper In Israel

## Jerusalem Diary

BY DAVID STONE



Robert K. Brown

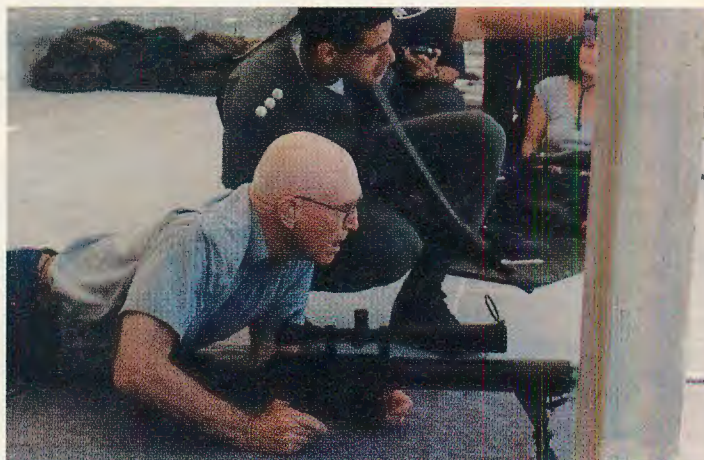
Beginning this month, David Stone (a frequent contributor to SOF) is launching a new column entitled "American Sniper In Israel." Judging by the high amount of interested generated by his earlier feature in our December 2001 issue, "American Sniper In Israel," we believe this latest effort will be very well-received. We, of course, invite readers' comments.

23 October 2001: This morning provided yet another example of the benefit of Israel's gun control policy. A lone *Tanzim* suicide gunman started shooting shoppers in Jerusalem's busy Talpiot commercial center. Within moments the terrorist had already wounded four. A soldier from a non-combat unit, a driver waiting for his International 6x6 to be repaired, happened to be in the immediate area. Identifying the source of the shooting the soldier "did what I was trained to do. Instinctively, I inserted the magazine I carried with me into my Gililon (IMI Galil Model SAR in 5.56 caliber), chambered a round and fired twice hitting the terrorist both times and killing him on the spot!" The presence of an armed individual "saved an untold number of lives," stated Mickey Levy, Jerusalem's Top Cop.

4 November: The IDF remains in parts of Area "A." The territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority is no longer a "Safe Haven" from which to plan, prepare and launch attacks. The terrorist infrastructure can't run and it can't hide. MaGav and IDF Special Units continue to capture or kill wanted terrorists. Since the murder of our tourism minister we have "removed" close to 40 of those named in the "to be arrested list" presented to Chairman Arafat, plus another 60 "wannabes."

As I drive through the French Hill intersection I notice a

Israeli sniper works out with accurized M14. Snipers play important role as part of Israeli anti-terrorist program. (below) Publisher Robert K. Brown with Armalite AR-10 (T) on Israeli sniper range.



Robert K. Brown

lone *Lochemmet MaGav* (Border Policewoman) with an M16 patrolling the bus stop. I'm home fewer than five minutes later. The phone rings. "Aba (father) I'm OK. There was just an attack at French Hill. Our bus is stopped. I'll be home very late," my younger daughter reports. She calls the instant there is an attack so each of us knows the other is OK. "How close were you to the attack," I ask. "There were three buses ahead of us waiting to get to the bus stop. We heard shots and saw people running, then heard more shots. It's quiet now, the first police car is just pulling up."

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The radio is not yet reporting the attack. Nor have the ambulances started rolling down the highway. I make a quick call to my wife to let her know our daughter is unharmed. Suddenly my daughter walks in. Before any additional police arrived to seal the area, her bus continued through the intersection no more than 20 feet from the location of the shooting.

"There were wounded, bleeding, being carried from a bus by bystanders. There were wounded on the road and in the bus. Some already had their face covered. I could tell they were dead, including the terrorist." I jump in the car and in three minutes I'm at the sight of the forth shooting attack at the intersection (there have also been two bombings, altogether six attacks since last October). I enter the scene and talk to a few of the gray uniformed YaSa'am, Special Patrol crowd control police officers I recognize.

Avi brings me up to speed.

"The terrorist stood by the side of the road indistinguishable from anyone else, until the moment he pulled out an M16. It is still unclear how he was able to keep a full-sized M16 concealed. Before anyone could react he stepped from the curb into the street and emptied a 30-round magazine at the double-long bus just several feet away. The bus was



Yimil Scammon

*Protective skirts protect running gear; ever-ready flexible MAG protects troops manning site.*

stopped at the traffic light waiting to turn left onto Route 1 and continue towards the city center. It was mass murder. He fired full-auto bursts back and forth the length of the bus aiming at the heads visible in the bus's windows. The Lochemmet came running from the bus stop on the other side of the street at the sound of the first shots. She came around the front of the bus just as the terrorist was finishing a magazine change. Immediately upon identifying the shooter the Lochemmet shot and killed


him. Another MaGavnick, a soldier and an armed civilian backed her up."

The bus the terrorist chose as his target was crowded with junior high school kids. Two are dead, a 14-year-old boy and a 16-year-old American girl; 48 are wounded, 9 critical and 20 moderate. Ironically, today was the day we were to pull out of most of the West Bank towns we had entered, again crediting Arafat's empty promise to arrest the violence and the Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah and Tanzim terrorists.




In an incredibly surrealistic twist, the TV news at 2100 hours has obtained a copy of a police video camera tape of the entire attack. It was recorded by one of the cameras high up above the intersection. Over and over we watch the attack

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in its entirety, recorded live as it took place. I now realize a limitation of what I call "security by video camera." The camera just records the event. It may inhibit and perhaps prevent, but if it doesn't, it does nothing to halt an attack, especially by a suicide shooter or bomber.

15 November: I take a busman's holiday. A group of computer company employees, former immigrants from the United States and Russia, are getting a day of training in handgun-shooting and contemporary Israeli "street survival" tactics. Eyal Ben-Artz, Managing Director of Alpha Firearms Training has been persuaded to conduct today's course. Eyal is to firearms instructing what Picasso is to painting.

Everyone arrives at the Dani-Hi Shooting Center in Caesarea at 0800. The students are not experienced shooters, just the opposite. They became gun owners because they need personal protection, particularly on their commute to and from work, during which they are simply moving targets. The morning is spent in dry-fire exercises and doctrine. Eyal pounds home reality, stressing how each exercise is calculated to save your life. He will succeed in desensitizing those students reluctant to kill. After lunch its live-fire.

Training is intense, hands-on (instructors' hands on students) and according to the philosophy that a hand grabbed or a foot kicked into correct position or a "timely" rap across the back of the head can drive home a lesson so that it will not be soon forgotten. It is a technique that works. Decades later I still remember a smack on the back received during an armored infantry live-fire exercise and, more important, why it was administered.

Eyal spends the last 90 minutes of daylight giving practical instruction on what to do if you are shot at while driving; when the attack comes from a fixed ambush, and from a passing vehicle. Then everyone practices using their own cars that have all been driven onto the range. Folks, this is Israel, not my alma mater, the Bethesda Chevy-Chase Chapter of the Izak Walton League in Poolsville, Maryland.

25 November: A high-ranking security official has confirmed that the various terror groups are now joining forces more often than not. While they still compete among themselves like some semi-pro sports league where

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scoring is in murdered Israelis, their cells are increasing comprised of members from multiple organizations. The same official ended his remarks on an ominous note. He made special mention of the increasing number of sniper units set up and of these units growing proficiency. Still, we are thinning out the ranks of their leadership. Over the weekend we killed Hamas terrorist No. 1.

27 November: This morning a suicide team of two Palestinian Security Services members (i.e. Palestinian Police) drove into the central bus station in the not too distant (from Jenin) Israel town of Afula and opened fire with their AKs. Their terrorist rampage continued as they moved from the station to the central market a half a kilometer away, firing wildly at anything that moved. They were unopposed for several minutes until chased down and one killed by an IDF reservist armed with an M16. Police arriving at the scene killed the other. Two Israelis were killed, more than 40 were hurt, many seriously; several with life-threatening wounds. As the attack was being carried out U.S. State Department envoy/mediator General Anthony Zinni was in a helicopter touring with Israeli Prime Minister Sharon. They flew over the scene of the attack and General Zinni watched the wounded being evacuated. It was the General's first day on the job.

29 November: Tonight terrorists driving a stolen Israeli car killed one soldier and wounding another. Two hours



Merkava indigenous Israeli tank with 105mm main guns mans Gilo/Bethlehem checkpoint during anniversary of Rachael's death. Flexible-mount MAG machine guns can respond immediately.

later a suicide bomber sitting in the middle of a public inter-city bus blew himself up, killing three and wounding nine. Apparently spooked by the backfire of a passing car, he exploded his bomb before reaching either his intended target area or before the bus was farther along its route and had become full of passengers. In the 48 hours since the start of U.S. General Zinni's visit, we have seven dead and over 50 wounded. ✕

photos: Yirmi Stanton

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31



## SOF at FOB "RHINO"

BY C. MARK BRINKLEY

Standing on the strip of hard-packed dirt that barely passes for a runway, looking around at a half-built military complex that sits like a terrorism oasis in the nowhere of the Kandahar desert, one thing becomes brutally obvious.

This is no hunting lodge.

Camp Rhino, the makeshift forward operating base in southern Afghanistan that troops from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit stormed 25 Nov., likely would have been a thriving Taliban command and control center south of Kandahar if the United States had given it six more months to grow. Instead, it became a launching point for what will likely be the final act in the war against Osama bin Laden and those who support him.

Only five journalists — myself, two writers from major wire services, a photographer and a video cameraman — were lucky enough to see the raid unfold and watch the complex be transformed that first week. Our good fortune came with a price, as we sat on the amphibious assault ship *U.S.S. Peleliu* for much of the week prior in a reporting vacuum, unable to write about the events that were rapidly unfolding because of the deal we struck to keep the raid secret.

We watched as plans for the mission solidified, culminating with a pre-raid briefing that lasted for more than three hours. The Marines would make their initial insertion from the bellies of six CH-53E Super Stallion transport helicopters, dropping a reinforced infantry company and a handful of Mercedes Benz fast-attack vehicles onto the crude flight line, from which they would fan out and create a perimeter around the complex. Follow-on forces would then come into the airstrip in Marine C-130 Hercules transports and huge Air Force C-17 Globemaster III jets.

Within two days, nearly a battalion of Marines would be



photos: AFP



*Marines lean out of a helicopter at Kandahar International Airport where they were landing in order to transport three Marines injured when one of them stepped on a land mine near the runway 16 December, 2001. Marine with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit stands guard in his fighting hole near the airport.*

on the ground, compete with Light Armored Vehicles and armored Humvees equipped with TOW missiles and .50-caliber machine guns.

The history of the complex is still somewhat mysterious. One Marine said it was started by the Russians and being finished by the Taliban. The most common story is that it was a hunting lodge owned by a wealthy Arab, used to hunt "little birds," one colonel said. That would explain the small

mosque in the center courtyard.

No one mentioned the 19 Oct. assault by the Rangers into southern Afghanistan more than a month earlier, and it wasn't until we were on the ground that it became clear the two locations were one and the same.

Coming from the ship, which was floating in the Arabian Sea more than 400 miles away, was tricky. It would take the helicopters one aerial refueling and more than four hours of nonstop flying to reach the objective. Dozens of weary Marines vomited as their helicopters gassed up amid the turbulence behind the KC-130 refuelers.

Fortunately, they were expecting no resistance and met with none. After four hours in the back of the helo and 20 minutes of puking his guts out, one infantryman said killing someone was the last thing he wanted to do.

### Welcome To Rhino

Stepping off the back of one of those helicopters onto the runway 26 Nov., the day after the raid, was like landing on the moon. The sand is so fine that it billows like smoke whenever a helicopter touches down, causing brownout conditions unlike any the pilots had ever seen.

The complex looked more like an industrial facility than a hunting lodge. Surrounded by a 7-foot-high perimeter wall, with four 30-foot observation posts at each corner, were more than a dozen buildings and warehouses, all with nicely leveled concrete floors, modern electrical outlets and florescent lighting, which works in most buildings.

The largest warehouse — 10,000 square feet of open space, apparently designed to house vehicles — was commandeered for billeting. A smaller warehouse nearby, complete with load-

ing docks and ramps for vehicle maintenance, was divided that first week into for maintenance, medical, supply, more billeting and reporters. The other buildings went for a combat operations center, aviation briefing rooms and more billeting.

Only the mosque was left untouched.

Crisscrossing the complex are paved roads, ending abruptly at dirt in some places, apparently the result of the quick abandonment of the construction project.

Some buildings were in better shape than others. Once-sturdy doors had been unhinged by shotgun blasts, though it's unclear whether the Marines or the Rangers were behind the trigger.

Bullet holes scarred the walls of many others, evidence of a fight the Marines said happened before they arrived.

Everything was painted in flat tans and grays, and the only color to be found was the black and orange graffiti spraypainted on the buildings and walls to alert arriving troops to which building housed what units. The most haggard structure inside the compound, a ratty little building with a massive hole blasted in the front wall, was designated in orange letters as "Force."

The recon Marines inside were busy, constantly coming and going. Those who were home used thick sheets of metal propped up by logs to keep the cold out at night.

Such construction materials were abundant throughout the camp — wood planks, pipes for scaffolding, buckets of primer, floor tiles and sheets of glass. When the Navy Seabees arrived late that first week, to do maintenance on the runway and minor construction on the facility, they took to the piles of scrap with big smiles, like kids in a toy store.

The runway — a 2-kilometer strip stretching northwest to southeast outside the north wall of the complex — was in bad shape. The aircraft that brought more troops and supplies to the area each night tore huge ruts in the landing strip, which the Seabees were forced to level out each day. One night, a C-130 was stuck temporarily in the sand and had to be pulled free.

The sand was hardest on the helicopters, which kicked up such a storm that static



AFP photo/Deve Martin

A US Marine 81mm mortar squad from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit carry heavy packs as they move to new locations at the airport in Kandahar. The mortar squad set up along the runway at the airfield which was taken over by Marines.



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# Afghanistan

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electricity sparked off the rotors, forming huge golden circles over the helicopters against the night sky. The AH-1W Cobra attack helicopters came in with their halos like angels of death, and the Marines eventually began bolting sheets of metal together into small landing pads for them in an effort to keep the dust down.

Looking around at the place, it was hard to tell what had transpired there before the Marines arrived. To complement the well-built entrance to the camp on the north wall side of the complex, a 15-foot hole was torn out of the south wall, offering vehicle access to the interior of the compound from both directions.

Latrines were dug outside the southern perimeter, in a weird "V" pattern that resembled fighting positions. No one would say who created the trenches, or the hole in the wall.

It had been American troops, however, who decided to use them as latrines. The word "shitters" was painted in 2-foot letters next to the hole.

The day after we arrived, Marines armed with spray paint were dispatched to turn the offending word into a goofy checkerboard-like pattern, sanitizing the war for the folks back home.

### "... Own A Piece Of Afghanistan."

That's how covering the war from Rhino was that first week. Strict ground rules dictated what we could report, and the ground rules were written so that they covered everything. Even weeks after it all began, I can't get permission to use certain things.

There would be no mention of special operations forces, assuming you saw any. No reporting on the rules of engagement. No listing of troop strength except in very generic terms, such as "battalion-sized" or "company-sized." No mention of specific numbers of helicopters or vehicles and no reporting on what equipment did not come ashore.

There would also be no interviews with senior commanders at the base, after the general in charge of the task force made waves the very first day when he said: "The Marines have landed, and we now own a piece of Afghanistan."

Brass in Washington spent the rest of the week reassuring the world that the United States had no plans to occupy Afghanistan for any length of time.

From then on, the big picture perspective on the war was releasable only by the Pentagon.

The highest-ranking person we

spoke to after that was a major.

### No Taliban In Sight

The Marines had picked a good place to land and a good time to do it. With battles beginning to rage about 70 miles to the northeast in Kandahar and alliance forces moving in for the kill, the Taliban were too busy with immediate problems to worry about the Marines.

The night after the raid was the closest any opposition forces made it to the camp that first week.

A convoy of vehicles was spotted heading in the general direction of the camp. Navy F-14 jets struck first, and the Marines were called in with their Cobras to investigate the hit. Two of the attack helicopters responded, finishing off a handful of armored vehicles before returning to the base.

Otherwise, things were quiet. As the buildup continued that first week, reconnaissance patrols went out every night in search of enemy forces. Only a few vehicles — civilian, not Taliban — were ever spotted near the camp.

On the perimeter, infantry Marines continued to refine their fighting holes, alert to the possibility of a Taliban attack, which would likely come from a squad-sized force if it came at all. But only camels dared come close, and the fear of a camel packed with explosives would spark a few tracer rounds in the dark to scare it away.

There were no confirmed kills.

The calm allowed the Marines to build ground power and stockpile supplies for their first mission, interdicting Taliban troops as they tried to flee the battle in Kandahar. Coalition forces — reporters who were there agreed not to release how many foreign troops were there or what equipment they brought along — from Australia, Germany and other nations began to arrive for the operation, and the camp suddenly got crowded. Light-armored vehicles from the 26th MEU arrived.

The light-armored vehicles were perfect for the terrain, aside from the massive dust cloud each kicked up as it stormed across the desert. Fast and mobile, they were loaded with MREs and bottled water and sent off 2 Dec. to cut the Taliban's lines of communication and stop as many fleeing forces as they could find.

The place had finally become a hunting lodge.

C. Mark Brinkley is a senior writer for Marine Corps Times, in Washington, D.C. ✕

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AP/Wide World by Vadim Ghirda

# Network Of Terror

## Radical Islamic Terrorist Groups — Who And Where They Are

BY JOHN PHILLIPS

**U**nless it is their profession to track and assess such threats, to most Americans the worldwide scourge of terrorism was for the most part just a headline that affected someone else. This changed with the still-smoldering attacks on New York and Washington.

Not that terrorism is new, of course. What is new is the scope of terrorism, the cooperation between terrorist groups and even rogue states, and the technology available to those who would happily destroy the world in an attempt to coercively mold it to their particular political or religious concept. Also new is the genuine potential that they just might do it unless they are stopped.

It might be instructive, then, to briefly review who some of these terrorist groups are, where they are, and who they would deign to terrorize to their will. Because the attacks on America were at the hand of Islamic terrorists whose base is in the Middle East, what follows is a delineation of these

groups from that sector who have demonstrated the ability or proclivity to attack U.S. interests. By no means are all terrorists of Islamic extraction, nor is the United States the only target of terrorism: It is simply that recent events have made those the subject at hand. Therefore it is only these groups we will deal with here.

### *al-Qaida*

Thought to be the seminal influence in the recent attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., al-Qaida was established by Usama Bin Laden in the late 1980s to bring together Arabs who fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion. It has helped finance, recruit, transport, and train Sunni Islamic extremists for the Afghan resistance. Its current stat-

ed goal is to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremist groups to overthrow regimes it deems "non-Islamic," and expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries. It issued a statement under the banner of "the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders" in February 1998, saying it was the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens — civilian or military — and their allies everywhere.

Al-Qaida plotted to carry out terrorist operations against U.S. and Israeli tourists visiting Jordan for Millennial celebrations. (Jordanian authorities thwarted the planned attacks and put 28 suspects on trial.) It conducted the bombings in August 1998 of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, that killed at least 301 persons and injured more than 5,000 others. It claims to have shot down U.S. helicopters and killed U.S. servicemen in Somalia in 1993 and to have conducted three bombings that targeted U.S. troops in Aden, Yemen, in December 1992. It was linked to the following plans that were not carried out: to assassinate Pope John Paul II during his visit to Manila in late 1994, the simultaneous bombings of the U.S. and Israeli Embassies in Manila and other Asian capitals in late 1994, and the midair bombing of a dozen U.S. trans-Pacific flights in 1995, and to kill President Clinton during a visit to the Philippines in early 1995. Al-Qaida continues to train, finance, and provide logistical support to terrorist groups in support of these and other goals, although it may be assumed that worldwide cooperation among financial institutions, and the ongoing military activity in their patron state of Afghanistan will severely hamper ongoing operations.

Al-Qaida may have several hundred to several thousand members, in addition to serving a focal point or umbrella organization for a worldwide network that includes many Sunni Islamic extremist groups such as Egyptian Islamic Jihad, some members of *al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya*, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and *the Harakat ul-Mujahidin*.

Al-Qaida has a worldwide reach, has cells in a number of countries, and is reinforced by its ties to Sunni extremist networks. Bin Laden and his key lieutenants reside in Afghanistan, and the group maintained terrorist training camps there for many years.

Bin Laden, son of a billionaire immigrant Saudi family, is said to have inherited approximately \$300 million that he has used to finance the group. Al-Qaida also maintains money-making front organizations, solicits donations from like-minded supporters, and illicitly siphons funds from donations to Muslim charitable organizations. As we go to press these diverse financial interests are being ferreted out in hopes of freezing assets used to finance terrorism.

#### ***al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group, IG)***

This is Egypt's largest militant group, active since the late 1970s. It appears to be loosely organized, but has an external wing with a worldwide presence. The group issued a ceasefire in March 1999, but its spiritual leader, Shaykh Umar Abd

al-Rahman, incarcerated in the United States, rescinded his support for the ceasefire in June 2000. The Gama'a has not conducted an attack inside Egypt since August 1998. Rifa'i Taha Musa — a hardline former senior member of the group — signed Usama bin Laden's February 1998 *fatwa* calling for attacks against U.S. civilians. The IG since has publicly denied that it supports bin Laden and frequently differs with public statements made by Taha Musa. Taha Musa has in the last year sought to push the group toward a return to armed operations, but the group, which still is led by Mustafa Hamza, has yet to break the unilaterally declared ceasefire. In

late 2000, Taha Musa appeared in an undated video with bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri threatening retaliation against the United States for Abdal-Rahman's continued incarceration. The IG's primary goal is to overthrow the Egyptian Government and replace it with an Islamic state, but



AP/Wide World by Sayyid Azim

*(opposite page) Ensuring a continuing supply of suicide bombers and cannon fodder, Palestinian youth are recruited young. Here young recruits demonstrate with Egyptian copies of Swedish K smgs at joint Islamic Jihad/Hamas demonstration in Gaza City. (left) When Al-Qaida blew up U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, it was but a precursor of things to come. More than 200 were killed, 5,000 injured in these blasts. (below) Drawing primarily from among Palestinian dissidents in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, HAMAS specializes in suicide bombings, but on a much smaller scale than the Trade Center attack.*



AP/Wide World by Adil Hana

Taha Musa also may be interested in attacking U.S. and Israeli interests.

This group specialized in armed attacks against Egyptian security and other government officials, Coptic Christians, and Egyptian opponents of Islamic extremism before the ceasefire. From 1993 until the ceasefire, al-Gama'at launched attacks on tourists in Egypt, most notably the attack in November 1997 at Luxor that killed 58 foreign tourists. It also claimed responsibility for the attempt in June 1995 to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Gama'a has not yet specifically attacked a U.S. citizen or facility but has threatened U.S. interests.

The 1998 ceasefire and security crackdowns following the attack in Luxor in 1997 probably have resulted in a substantial decrease in the group's numbers, although at its peak the IG probably commanded several thousand hard-core members and an equal cadre of sympathizers.

The IG Operates mainly in southern Egypt, and appears to have support in Cairo, Alexandria, and other urban locations, particularly among unemployed graduates and students. The IG has a worldwide presence, including Sudan, the United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Austria, and Yemen. The Egyptian Government believes that Iran, bin Laden, and Afghan militant groups support the organization, and it also may obtain some funding through various Islamic nongovernmental organizations.

#### **Al-Jihad (AKA Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Jihad Group, Islamic Jihad)**

Al-Jihad is an Egyptian Islamic extremist group active since the late 1970s, and a close partner of Bin Laden's al-Qaida organization, although it has suffered setbacks as a result of numerous arrests of operatives worldwide, most recently in Lebanon and Yemen. Its primary stated goals are to overthrow the Egyptian Government and replace it with an Islamic state and attack U.S. and Israeli interests in Egypt and abroad.

Al-Jihad specializes in armed attacks against high-level Egyptian Government personnel, including cabinet ministers, and car-bombings against official U.S. and Egyptian facilities. The original Jihad was responsible for the assassination in 1981 of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and claimed responsibility for the attempted assassinations of Interior Minister Hassan al-Alfi in August 1993 and Prime Minister Atef Sedky in November 1993. Al-Jihad has not conducted an attack inside Egypt since 1993 and has never targeted foreign tourists there, but was responsible for Egyptian Embassy bombing in Islamabad in 1995. In 1998, a planned attack against the U.S. Embassy in Albania was thwarted.

Al-Jihad is believed to have several hundred hard-corps members, and operates in the Cairo area with a network outside Egypt, including Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Lebanon, and the United Kingdom. The Egyptian Government claims that both Iran and Bin Laden support Al-Jihad. This group also may obtain some funding through various Islamic NGOs, cover businesses, and criminal enterprises.

#### **Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)**

The PLF broke away from the PFLP-GC in mid-1970s, and later split again into pro-PLO, pro-Syrian, and pro-Libyan factions. The Pro-PLO faction was led by Muhammad Abbas (Abu Abbas), who became a member of the PLO Executive Committee in 1984 but left it in 1991. The Abu Abbas-led faction is best known for aerial attacks against Israel. Abbas's group also was responsible for the attack in 1985 on the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* and the murder of U.S. citizen Leon Klinghoffer. A war-



AP/Wide World by Adel Hana

*Hizballah draws financing from Iran and Syria, has cells in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. — was responsible for suicide truck bombing of U.S. Embassy and USMC barracks in Lebanon, Israeli Embassy in Argentina. Small boy with toy pistol waves Islamic Jihad and Hizballah flags at Al-Quds Day rally.*

rant for Abu Abbas's arrest is outstanding in Italy.

Their current strength is unknown. The PLO faction was based in Tunisia until the *Achille Lauro* attack, and is now based in Iraq. The PLF receives support mainly from Iraq, and has received support from Libya in the past.

#### **Hizballah (Party of God) (AKA Islamic Jihad, Revolutionary Justice Organization, Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, and Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine)**

The Hizballah is a radical *Shia* group formed in Lebanon, dedicated to increasing its political power in Lebanon and opposing Israel and the Middle East peace negotiations. It is strongly anti-West and anti-Israel, and closely allied with, and often directed by, Iran — but may have conducted operations that were not sanctioned by Tehran.

Hizballah is known or suspected to have been involved in numerous anti-U.S. terrorist attacks, including the suicide truck bombing of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983 and the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut in September 1984. Elements of the group were responsible for the kidnapping and detention of American and other Western hostages in Lebanon. The group also attacked the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992 and is a suspect in the 1994 bombing of the Israeli cultural center in Buenos Aires. In the fall of 2000, it captured three Israeli soldiers in the Shabaa Farms and kidnapped an Israeli noncombatant whom it may have lured to Lebanon under false pretenses.

With several thousand supporters and a few hundred terrorist operatives, Hizballah operates in the Bekka Valley, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and southern Lebanon. It has established cells in Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and Asia, and receives substantial amounts of financial, training, weapons, explosives, political, diplomatic, and organizational aid from Iran and Syria.

**Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) (AKA Fatah Revolutionary Council, Arab Revolutionary Brigades, Black September, and Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Muslims )**

The ANO is an international terrorist organization led by Sabri al-Banna, which split from the PLO in 1974. It comprises various functional committees, including political, military, and financial. The ANO has carried out terrorist attacks in 20 countries, killing or injuring almost 900 persons. Targets include the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Israel, moderate Palestinians, the PLO, and various Arab countries. Major attacks included the Rome and Vienna airports in December 1985, the Neve Shalom synagogue in Istanbul and the Pan Am flight 73 hijacking in Karachi in September 1986, and the *City of Poros* day-excursion ship attack in Greece in July, 1988. The ANO is suspected of assassinating PLO deputy chief Abu Iyad and PLO security chief Abu Hul in Tunis in January 1991. ANO assassinated a Jordanian diplomat in Lebanon in January 1994 and has been linked to the killing of the PLO representative there. ANO has not attacked Western targets since the late 1980s.

The ANO comprises only a few hundred plus limited overseas support structure, including safe-haven, training, logistic assistance, and financial aid from Iraq, Libya, and Syria (until 1987), in addition to close support for selected operations. It has had some dramatic successes. Al-Banna relocated to Iraq in December 1998, where the group maintains a presence. ANO has an operational presence in Lebanon, including in several Palestinian refugee camps. Financial problems and internal disorganization have reduced the group's activities and capabilities. Authorities shut down the ANO's operations in Libya and Egypt in 1999. The ANO has demonstrated an ability to operate over a wide area, including the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, and may be heard from again.

**HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement)**

HAMAS was formed in late 1987 as an outgrowth of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Various HAMAS elements have used both political and violent means, including terrorism, to pursue the goal of establishing an Islamic Palestinian state in place of Israel. HAMAS is loosely structured, with some elements working clandestinely and others working overtly through mosques and social service institutions to recruit members, raise money, organize activities, and distribute propaganda. HAMAS's strength is concentrated in the Gaza Strip and a few areas of the West Bank, where it has also engaged in peaceful political activity, and run candidates in West Bank Chamber of Commerce elections.

HAMAS activists, especially those in the Izz el-Din al-Qassam Brigades, have conducted many attacks — including large-scale suicide bombings — against Israeli civilian and military targets. In the early 1990s, they also targeted suspected Palestinian collaborators and Fatah rivals, claiming several attacks during the unrest in late 2000.

The number of hard-core HAMAS members is difficult to quantify, but it has tens of thousands of supporters and sympathizers, and receives support from Palestinian expats, Iran and private benefactors in Saudi Arabia. HAMAS is primarily located in and operates in the occupied territories and Israel. In August 1999, Jordanian authorities closed the group's Political Bureau offices in Amman, arrested its leaders, and prohibited the group from operating on Jordanian territory.

**Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO) (AKA The National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA, the militant wing of the MEK), the People's Mujahidin of Iran (PMOI), National Council of Resistance (NCR), Muslim Iranian Student's Society (front organization used to garner financial support))**

The MEK/MKO was formed in the 1960s by the college-educated children of Iranian merchants, and the MEK sought to counter what it perceived as excessive Western influence in the Shah's regime. Following a philosophy that mixes Marxism and Islam, it has developed into the largest and most active armed Iranian dissident group. Its history is studded with anti-Western activity, and, most recently, attacks on the interests of the clerical regime in Iran and abroad.

This group is of interest in that it is against other terrorist groups and its own rogue government. Its worldwide campaign against the Iranian Government stresses propaganda and occasionally uses terrorist violence. During the 1970s the MEK staged terrorist attacks inside Iran and killed several U.S. military personnel and civilians working on defense projects in Tehran, and it supported the takeover in 1979 of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. In April 1992 it conducted attacks on Iranian embassies in 13 different countries, demonstrating the group's ability to mount large-scale operations overseas. The normal pace of anti-Iranian-government operations increased during the "Operation Great Bahman" in February 2000, when the group claimed it launched a dozen attacks against Iran. During the remainder of the year, the MEK regularly claimed that its members were involved in mortar attacks and hit-and-run raids on Iranian military, law enforcement units, and government buildings near the Iran-Iraq border. The MEK also claimed six mortar attacks on civilian government and military buildings in Tehran.

It has several thousand fighters based in Iraq, with an extensive overseas support structure from among Iranian expats. Most of the fighters are organized in the MEK's National Liberation Army (NLA).

In the 1980s the MEK's leaders were forced by Iranian security forces to flee to France. Most resettled in Iraq by 1987. In the mid-1980s the group did not mount terrorist operations in Iran at a level similar to its activities in the 1970s. In the 1990s, however, the MEK claimed credit for an increasing number of operations in Iran.

**Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)**

Originating among militant Palestinians in the Gaza Strip during the 1970s, the PIJ is committed to the creation of an Islamic Palestinian state and the destruction of Israel through holy war. Because of its strong support for Israel, the United States has been identified as an enemy of the PIJ, but the group has not specifically conducted attacks against U.S. interests in the past. In July 2000, however, the PIJ publicly threatened to attack U.S. interests if the U.S. Embassy is moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The PIJ also opposes moderate Arab governments that it believes have been tainted by Western secularism.

The PIJ conducted at least three attacks against Israeli interests in late 2000, including one to commemorate the anniversary of former PIJ leader Fathi Shaqaqi's murder in Malta on 26 October 1995. The PIJ has conducted suicide bombings against Israeli targets in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Israel. Headquartered in Syria, it operates primarily in Israel, Jordan and Lebanon. It receives financial

*Continued on page 79*



# False Tenets

## CIA Sacrificial Lambs

BY JOHN WEISMAN

**ON** Saturday, 24 November 2001, roughly 300 Taliban and al-Qaeda survivors from the American air attacks on Kunduz, including Afghan and foreign fighters, surrendered to Northern Alliance general Abdul Rashid Dostum. Incredibly, the prisoners were not searched on the spot. Instead, they were put into trucks and transported to Dostum's headquarters, a sprawling fortress built in the 1880s at Qala-i-Jangi.

According to press reports, once the prisoners were inside the fortress, they were asked to empty their pockets. Which they did — with lethal results. At least two pulled out grenades from their clothes, yanked the pins, and killed both themselves and two Northern Alliance commanders — one was appropriately named Nadir — as well as several guards. Even after that, however, the prisoners were not stripped and searched. Nor were the Northern Alliance guards reinforced. Instead, the prisoners were taken to underground cells in the fortress's southwest quadrant, where they joined more than 300 other captured Taliban



*George Tenet, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, watches as the coffin containing the body of CIA agent Johnny Spann arrives at Andrews Air Force Base. Was his death exploited by Tenet? Was his patriotism and honor sacrificed for political means?*

and al-Qaeda fighters.

The following morning, Dave and Mike, two young Americans dressed in mufti, showed up at Qala-i-Jangi to interrogate the prisoners in order to identify the al-Qaeda members. Dave, who should not be further identified, and Mike, whose full name was Johnny Micheal Spann, were thirtysomething paramilitary officers from the Special Activities Division of the CIA's Directorate of Operations. Like most of those working for the horribly acronymed SAD, Mike and Dave were former U.S. military. They had been in Afghanistan since early October. Other SAD CIA personnel had been in-country since late September.

The SAD mission was multifold. Equipped with secure satellite communications equipment, and backed up by unmanned Predator drones and other aircraft, SAD had been tasked to gather intelligence to help U.S. Special Forces in the hunt for Osama bin Laden, as well as making contact with the Northern Alliance to provide the rebels with intelligence and help to coordinate their activities. Their purpose at Qala-i-Jangi, says E, a veteran CIA paramilitary officer, "was to sort out the al-Qaeda foreigners from the Taliban and identify for interrogation ... those who could be used to extract intel on the networks that brought those guys to the war zone." Obviously, Dave and Mike were also interested in eliciting whatever information they could about Osama bin Laden's whereabouts.

Johnny Micheal Spann was a textbook case recruit for the CIA's paramilitary division. Motivated, patriotic, and dedicated to public service, Spann came from the small town of Winfield, Alabama, where he played high-school football and dreamed of becoming a Marine. He attended Auburn University after high school, and immediately after graduation he enlisted in



photos: REUTERS/POOL/Joe Marquette

the Corps. A Marine artillery captain with eight years of service including tours in Okinawa and North Carolina, Spann moved to Northern Virginia with his then-wife Kathryn and their two children, Allison and Emily, in 1999 to join CIA. He separated from Kathryn in April of 2000, and after his divorce quickly remarried Shannon, a young woman he'd met at CIA. On 8 June 2001, Shannon gave birth to their son.

### HOW SAD

Soon after September 11, Spann was, according to some sources, put under the operational control of Langley's reinvigorated

Counterterrorism Center and deployed to Afghanistan. SAD's acronym may be new. Its mission is not. CIA has employed young paramilitary officers for decades. Felix Rodriguez, the legendary Cuban-born contract agent who helped capture Che Guevara in Bolivia in October of 1967, worked for the Agency's paramilitary staff both in South America, and four years later, as a 30-year-old agent under U.S. Army cover, as a CIA counterinsurgency operative in Vietnam. Indeed, at least one future commanding officer of the U.S. Navy's elite SEAL Team Two was "sheep-dipped" by the Agency in the mid-1980s and used to great advantage in CIA's secret war against the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. Paramilitary officers were also an integral part of the Agency's NILE (Northern Iraq Liaison Element) teams sent to Salah ad-Din in Kurdish controlled northern Iraq in 1994 and 1995 to help coordinate the Iraqi National Congress's two unsuccessful coup attempts against Saddam Hussein.

There has been previous press coverage of paramilitary or covert-action missions. It is usually followed by loud bitching about the endangering of national security from CIA officials. This time was different. Not only were SAD's covert activities in Afghanistan leaked to the press by high-ranking officials intimately knowledgeable and well-informed about SAD's secret capabilities, the leaks occurred while dozens of officers like Dave and Mike were and still are in harm's way. In harm's way because when CIA paramilitary officers operate in mufti — civilian clothes — they do not come under the Geneva Convention rules for military prisoners. Unlike Marines or SF troops, captured CIA officers can be summarily executed.

But the fact that CIA personnel might be killed didn't bother the highly placed sources for an 18 November

2001 *Washington Post* article by well-connected Washington Establishment reporter Bob Woodward. Entitled "Secret CIA Units Playing a Central Combat Role," the article described in detail SAD's mission and its tactical capabilities in Afghanistan. The article also went on to extol the Agency's role in the war, claiming that "Senior administration officials attribute a significant portion of the speed and effectiveness of recent Northern Alliance advances in Afghanistan to the assistance of CIA units."

Was there an immediate, huge burst of outrage from the CIA's executive suite on the seventh floor to this massive lapse of OPSEC? The answer is: not a whiff.

### The "Buzz" Around Town

Indeed, according to former and current intelligence sources in a position to know, neither CIA director George J. Tenet — a former Capitol Hill staffer — nor his hand-picked executive director, a former multi-millionaire investment banker turned spook named A. B. "Buzzy" Krongard, was apoplectic over the *Post's* front-page coverage of CIA's covert activities in Afghanistan, even though it put their own people's lives at risk.

That, however, wasn't how career intelligence professionals saw it. Woodward's story was specific enough so that *Weekly Intelligence Notes*, the newsletter of AFIO, the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, took the story's high-ranking sources to task: "[Woodward's] CIA story, with its depth of detail and specificity regarding ongoing operations of covert action units ... totally undercuts the position of government officials who are urging secrecy and discretion in discussion of intelligence and military activities," wrote WIN's editors

What AFIO's censure — and Woodward's article — failed to discuss, however, was the cynical political motive behind the dangerous leak. Woodward's story bolstered Tenet and Krongard's battered and tarnished status in certain Capitol Hill offices and within the intel community, where they are perceived as intelligence amateurs. It is on George Tenet's watch, after all, that CIA was unable to penetrate al-Qaeda in order to determine its capabilities, and more important, the terrorist organization's intentions, prior to September 11. It is on George Tenet's watch that the CIA allowed the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade

because it didn't have the right maps. It is under George Tenet's watch that the Khobar Towers and U.S.S. *Cole* bombing investigations have been botched. And it is under George Tenet's watch that the Counterterrorism Center was, in the words of J, a former CTC official, "eviscerated."

"George Tenet stripped CTC," the officer asserts. "It started when he was John Deutch's guy. He did away with CTC's Rapid Deployment Force in Europe and its domestically based teams. He took our equipment. He shut down our training capabilities. Worst of all, he stood by when our ability to recruit agents who had criminal records or had perhaps been party to human-rights abuses was cut off. I mean, who do you recruit to penetrate a terrorist cell, some grade-school teacher?"

It hadn't always been that way. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, the Agency's core of streetwise, experienced, Arabic-fluent case officers were able to penetrate the innermost circles of the PLO's Fatah and Black September organizations with the full support of CIA's leadership even though many of the agents they recruited were murderers. Black September's "Red Prince," Ali Hassan Salameh, the bloody-handed architect of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, was, for example, a CIA developmental.

### Wanted: A Few Good Spies

But those sorts of successes — or recruitments — don't often happen these days. Instead, you have a CIA where, according to one former Agency official quoted in a newspaper, the current executive director — the aforementioned A. B. "Buzzy" Krongard — asks people he meets to punch him in the stomach to show how tough he is. If Krongard ever came up against the sort of conniving, shrewd, street-wise case officers who used to people the Agency when professionals like Richard Helms or William Casey were in charge and made that request, he would be sucker-punched, kicked in the balls, and left on the floor to feel a lot more "Fuzzy" than "Buzzy." But under the Tenet/Krongard stewardship, the Agency has hemorrhaged experienced case officers with the language ability, street-sense, grit, and moxie necessary to spot, assess, recruit, train, and run foreign assets. So, the zero-defect, politically correct computer nerds, intel squirrels, and assorted dweebs Buzzy accosts in the Langley corridors won't

do him any harm, because they just don't think that way.

According to R, a case officer with 21 years of experience in the Middle East, Africa, and several former Soviet republics, there are few if any Arabic, Pashto, Urdu, or Dari-speaking case officers out in the field anymore. Instead, R says, CIA stations from Riyadh and Damascus to Dushanbe and Islamabad are filled with straitlaced former reports officers, bookish intelligence analysts, and worthless EEO hires who shun agent recruitments and rely on liaison with the local intelligence services or English-language newspapers to get their information. Adequate language training and—equally as important—the proper mentoring of greenhorn case officers by experienced field hands, says R. His view is seconded by E, a retired supergrade who ran paramilitary activities on three continents over his thirty-year career.

“George is always claiming that CIA's language capabilities are improving,” says R. “And he said right from the beginning of his tenure — in 1997 — that terrorism is one of CIA's top priorities. By 1997 and 1998 we certainly knew about al-Qaeda. But I bet if you were able to dig out the number of case officers who studied Pashto and Dari between 1998 and now, the number would be maybe one or two — if that many.” And that number, R reminds us, is for case officers. Not for the young, energetic, patriotic, but inadequately trained paramilitary officers like Johnny Spann.

### Palace Revolt

Which brings us back to Qala-i-Jangi on the morning of 25 November 2001, where Johnny Spann and Dave were about to interview the Taliban prisoners. In 1991, at the end of the Gulf War, a small coterie of streetwise, Arab-speaking case officers, experienced in dealing with agents, suggested that they all be detailed to Saudi Arabia, where they would interrogate Iraqi POWs to identify those who might be suitable for recruitment. The officers' requests were denied by a timid and misguided CIA leadership that was more worried about offending the Saudis than it was spotting and recruiting agents who could be sent home to work inside Iraq. But the example is valuable, because it illustrates one basic fact about intelligence gathering: successful interrogations and the resulting recruitments can be best carried out by experienced case

officers, who understand their subjects. A seasoned case officer tries to learn about his target—everything from language subtleties, vulnerabilities, quirks, even family history, if that's what it takes. The seasoned pro not only reads body language as if it was a McGuffey *Primer*, he knows how to push the right psychological and cultural buttons in order to elicit information. Through his years of real-world experience the veteran also has an active and sensitive bullshit detector, which can help determine whether or not the subject is fabricating.



REUTERS/Spinn family photo/HC

*Johnny Micheal Spann, were thirtysomething paramilitary officers from the Special Activities Division of the CIA's Directorate of Operations.*

But remember: Johnny Spann and Dave were not case officers. They had military training, and Dave appears to have had language capabilities. But they lacked many of the subtle “people skills” that can be developed only after years of being mentored by competent, seasoned case officers. Were they too eager to do their jobs? We do not know. What we do know is that they did not insist — as they should have — that the prisoners be brought to them in a secure location, one by one. Instead, they allowed themselves to be put in the midst of a group of potentially deadly hostiles.

Had they even been taught the correct procedures in the first place? We

do not know that, either. What is known, is that former military officers like Johnny Spann who are admitted to the CIA's paramilitary division do not generally go through the six-month-long case officer training course at Camp Peary, the CIA's spy school near Williamsburg, Virginia. Instead, they take an accelerated course in the Washington area. The course includes quick overviews of such subjects as “debriefing,” which is the CIA's current and politically correct term for interrogation, covert communications, and reports writing. At the end of that course, Spann and his fellow students would have been equipped with the rudimentary capabilities to gather intelligence, assess it, and communicate what they had learned back to headquarters. Probably, says a seasoned clandestine service operative, not much more than that.

But whatever Johnny Spann learned wasn't enough. Because, according to one former DO operator with long-term experience in the counterterrorism area, Johnny Spann and his partner Dave “broke all the rules” on the morning of Sunday, 25 November.

“If my people had been there,” the DO veteran says, “those prisoners would all have had their balls showing, because we were taught to take nothing for granted. We'd take 'em one by one and have 'em stripped, to make sure they weren't carrying any weapons—and as a way to intimidate them. Then, once we were sure our people were secure, we'd interrogate 'em — singly.”

That did not happen. According to various press accounts, as well as video tape shot by an Afghan crew at Qala-i-Jangi, what happened next was that dozens of the estimated 600 Taliban and al-Qaeda prisoners were brought up from their basement holding cells to the huge, flat southwestern quadrant of the fortress. There, under a brilliant blue sky they were interrogated by the pair of CIA paramilitary officers.

Both Johnny Spann and Dave are visible in the pictures. Spann is wearing blue jeans and a black jumper. An AK-47 is slung over his shoulder. Dave, bearded, is dressed in a long black tunic worn over light trousers. The interviewees included the Marin County, California turncoat-cum-Talib, John Walker.

From the video, parts of which were made public on the *Newsweek* Magazine web site, as well as *Newsweek's* transcript, it is unclear whether or not Johnny Spann realized

he was talking to an American.

The video shows the young CIA officer hunkering down to face the filthy, barefooted Walker, whose arms are bound behind his back.

"Where are you from?" Spann asks. "Where are you from? You believe in what you're doing here that much, you're willing to be killed here? How were you recruited to come here? Who brought you here?...*Hel-lo!*"

When Walker remains silent, Spann takes his picture with a pocket-sized digital camera. Then he stands up and talks to Dave. Their conversation is picked up by the cameraman's mike.

Dave says, "The problem is, he's got to decide whether he wants to live or die and die here. We're just going to leave him and he's going to fucking sit in prison the rest of his fucking short life. It's his decision, man."

Shortly afterward, at some point after the camera was turned off, the situation went south. At press time, the precise timeline of the events was still unclear. But what happened is not. Somehow, prisoners in the subterranean cell area overpowered their captors. They ascended to the southwestern quadrant, where they attacked the Northern Alliance guards, as well as the two CIA officers. (It was not known at press time whether the two CIA officers ever went down into the basement area, something that has been suggested in some press reports.)

According to other published accounts, Johnny Spann drew his pistol and shot one of his attackers dead. Dave also drew his weapon and fired, killing more. But there were too many Taliban, and too few guards, and it didn't take more than a few seconds for both Americans to be overpowered.

Dave was able to grab an AK-47—perhaps the same one Spann had been holding—and, after shooting a number of the prisoners, he escaped, sprinted roughly 300 yards to the fort's northernmost tower. There, breathless, he found refuge with a German television crew. His partner was not so lucky. According to various published accounts, Johnny Spann was either shot or beaten to death by the Taliban prisoners, who then raided Qala-i-Jangi's two armories, and stood off a combined force of Northern Alliance, U.S. Special Forces, and British SAS troops until the rebellion was finally quelled on Tuesday, 27 November. When Johnny Spann's body was finally retrieved, it was discovered that the Taliban prisoners had booby-trapped it.

Johnny Micheal Spann was the 79th CIA officer to have died in the line of duty since the Agency was founded in 1947. He went to his grave exemplifying the best traditions of the United States Marine Corps. He died as he had lived: believing in Duty, Honor, Country.

But his brave death was cynically exploited by DCI George Tenet. Tenet himself identified Spann as an Agency operative during a 28 November closed-circuit television address to CIA employees. CIA spokesman Mark Mansfield said Tenet had decided that

that other CIA paramilitary officers can be identified and targeted. Doing so is basic intelligence-gathering tradecraft.

But when George Tenet made our adversaries' work easier, he had more important things on his mind than the mere lives of the people who worked for him. There appears to be a political motive behind this rash act that is similar to the leaks behind Bob Woodward's November 18th *Washington Post* story about SAD's activities in Afghanistan. Releasing Johnny Micheal Spann's name and the circumstances of his heroic death was the *second* dramat-



**Local Afghan Red Cross workers carry the remains of a Taliban fighter on a stretcher after fighting ended at a fort near Mazar-i-Sharif, in northern Afghanistan, 28 November 2001.**

confirming Spann's activities was "fitting and appropriate."

Such a rapid identification is unprecedented. When Fred Woodward, the acting T'bilisi, Georgia, station chief was murdered in August of 1983, even though James Woolsey, the then-DCI, flew back to the United States with the body, the CIA refused to acknowledge that Woodward was a CIA officer. Of the 79 stars that are etched on the Agency's memorial wall at Langley, Woodward's remains that one of the 36 that are unidentified.

Moreover, Tenet persisted in identifying Spann, even though by doing so the CIA director helped America's enemies to identify the people with whom Johnny Micheal Spann worked. There is no doubt in this writer's mind that those to whom President George W. Bush refers as "the evil ones" are sorting through hours of video tape available through commercial and news media sources to see if there are any images of Spann and his colleagues so

ic, effective gambit in less than two weeks that was aimed at garnering immediate and positive publicity for an Agency that some critics have called dysfunctional, and a DCI who some critics have advocated firing.

Americans should be outraged that Johnny Micheal Spann's loyalty, patriotism, and dedication were sacrificed by cynical CIA executives more interested in advancing their careers and expanding their empires than in protecting their troops.

*A memorial fund has been established at the Citizens Bank in Winfield, Alabama. Contributions can be sent to the Johnny Micheal Spann Memorial Trust Fund, PO Box 550, Winfield, Alabama, 35594.*

*Weisman is the author of the New York Times best-selling Rogue Warrior counterterrorism novels. He is currently researching a nonfiction book about U.S. intelligence activities in the Middle East. ✕*

# The Battle For Kabul



## SOF On The Front Lines

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MIKE WINCHESTER

**T**he crackle of small-arms fire was almost drowned out by the angry growl of the engines of the T-55s and T-62s. As the line of armor crawled slowly through fields and orchards towards the Kabul highway, the mud walls beside the farm track still screened us from the fierce fire-fight in progress a few hundred meters south, and from any Talib or Arab zealot with an RPG or 82mm recoilless. But that wouldn't be for much longer.

The four main battle tanks and two BMP fighting vehicles of the United Front's Guards Brigade formed the first armored punch that would break through the front line on the so-called Old Road, the main axis of advance for the long-awaited push on Kabul. On the back of a pickup wedged between the two lead tanks and the bulk of the unit behind, I watched through clouds of fine dust as the first T-55 lurched forward and up onto the tarmac. The second tank followed. Then it was our turn to push up the brief incline and swing south onto the highway to the Afghan capital.

Instinctively I braced myself for the whoosh of the first RPG round arcing in towards the now exposed armor still grinding forward in front of us. Several crewmen actually crouched in the open behind the turret. But against the back-



*(top) Guards Bde armor moves out from assembly point onto main highway and over the front line. (above) Northern alliance troops and armor sweep up to Khairkhanah pass.*

ground crackle of automatic fire to our flanks, no incoming was intended specifically for us. Behind, more tanks, BMPs and then jeeps and troop-trucks were moving up onto the road in a still hesitant advance.

Within five minutes we reached Dorahi - the intersection of the main highway and the paved side-road that turned off east to Bagram airbase. The tanks lumbered around the blackened carcasses of knocked-out trucks and vehicles destroyed in earlier American airstrikes. Then we were passing front-line Taliban bunkers some still manned by dead enemy and moving finally into enemy territory. But we weren't alone: from the back of the pickup I could see

ragged lines of infantry moving south on both flanks in what was clearly a general advance. 1630 hours, Monday 12 November 2001— the breakthrough on the Kabul front was finally happening.

But they made us wait for it. After a bone-shattering, four day jeep ride across the Hindu Kush range I'd arrived at Jabal Saraj the United Front's rear base over one month before. That had been 10 October, three days after the U.S. bombing campaign had begun. Crazy as it seems looking back now, we imagined ourselves then in a race with time to reach the front before the assault on Kabul began.

### First Fire

What no one had reckoned on was the length of time it would take for the U.S. bombing campaign to gain momentum and for the UF to get their own act together. The bombing first appeared confined to targets in and around urban areas (SOF Jan 2002, The Rockets Red Glare) particularly Kabul. Then, two weeks later on 21 October, it shifted clearly into the forward edge of battle area (FEBA) between the front lines around 45 clicks north of Kabul and the city. Only towards late October did the airstrikes begin to take out high value targets close to or on the front

line itself, courtesy of U.S. Special Forces armed with ground laser target designators.

Basing themselves in different parts of the Panjshir Valley, maybe two to three hours drive from the front lines and well away from the hack-pack, the SF guys kept a decidedly low profile. But it isn't easy operating covertly with a couple hundred eager press types in search of the big exclusive in your AO. Gradually folks got wise to their favorite OPs.

Best known was the battered air-traffic control tower at Bagram Airbase which provided a great panorama of the front-lines and Talib-held turf, broken by low, rocky hills, that stretched away south towards Kabul. The SF men would generally move in between noon and 1300 when General Baba Jan, the genial commander of the Bagram 515 Brigade, would close off the base to prying eyes of the press corps. But occasionally their Afghan minders would screw up or some journalist would be in the base when he was supposed not to be and oops: You'd bump into them in their jeeps with dark-tinted windows in a narrow farm lane.

For almost all of October the bombing campaign on Shomali involved raids late afternoon or night-time by two or three carrier-based F-18A Hornets dropping maybe a total of five to eight bombs. None of this did much to impress the Afghans, some of whom had evidently seen footage of Henry Kissinger's B-52s over Cambodia circa 1970-1973. They wanted more, much more, and yesterday. As one clearly irritated commander put it to me: "All the Taliban and foreign forces have moved up to the front but as far as I can see, the bombing has not been particularly effective. It has not been a systematic bom-

bardment and it has actually resulted in some enemy units moving further forward to positions closer to ours."

### Winds Of Change

The mood changed sharply on 31 October, however. I was driving back from a meeting in the Panjshir with the UF's intel chief Mohammad Arif and sure enough, around 1100 hours was the unmistakable sight of a B-52H heavy bomber powering across the sky, its white contrails sharp against the cloudless blue. An hour or so later it was back, headed south, presumably to the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. That flight was obviously headed north to hit Taliban targets around Mazar-i-Sharif or Kunduz. But later that day and in the days that followed the big bombers were back, one per strike, hitting targets across the Shomali

FEBA. The rumbling thunder of the explosions and the huge plumes of smoke and dust had the UF grunts and commanders happier than they'd been in weeks.

As the bombing campaign progressed, UF preparations also gathered momentum, More troops were arriving in Jabal Saraj and the town of Charikar, some 15 clicks south. Second echelon units in various brigades based across Shomali were issued new uniforms and officially upgraded to "zarbati" or "strike" units. What in early October had been a UF force on the Shomali Plain of some 3,000 to 4,000 troops had, by early November been built up to close to double that figure.

Taliban forces, meanwhile, were also reported to be reinforcing their frontlines. According to UF intel estimates the number of troops in the greater Kabul theater Afghan, Pakistani, Arab and other assorted foreigners aligned to the al-Qaida network was about between 8,000 to 10,000. Even with command-and-control, and artillery and armored assets being degraded by the unremitting U.S. strikes, the ratio of forces wasn't great. Given U.S. air support, the battle for Shomali was probably only going to end one way. But with the numbers stacked up as they were, it promised nonetheless to be messy.

Early November brought a series of UF training exercises on the slopes between Jabal Saraj and the neighboring town of Gulbahar at the mouth of the



*(left) A foreign militant, possibly Arab or Pakistani, killed by mob in Shahr-e-Nao park, central Kabul. (below) At Khairkhanah Pass outside Kabul, a captured Talib is beaten up before being saved from execution by Western journalists.*



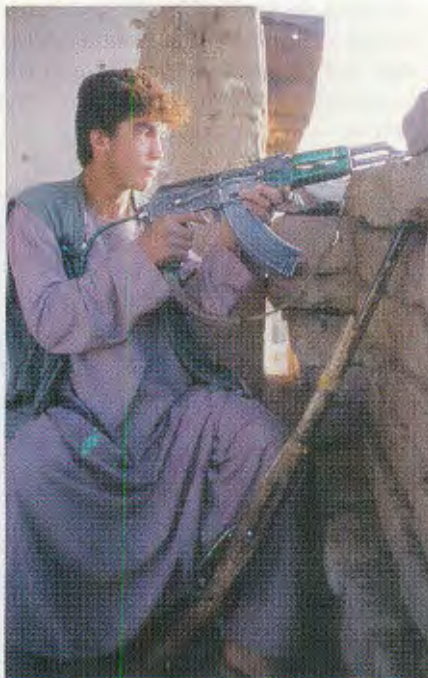
Panjshir Valley. They involved both armor and large numbers of infantry and in both categories the Guards Brigade was well represented. The Guards were a largely Panjshiri outfit, which fell under the direct command of Kabul theatre commander, Bismillah Khan. While not an "elite" unit in any western sense of that term, they were at least better trained, better equipped and far more experienced than other line brigades and generally regarded themselves as several cuts above the rest.

The live-fire exercises involving infantry units supported by AFVs storming empty hangars were not entirely without military value. But their primary purpose was undoubtedly PR: an effort on the part of the UF command to display some more or less disciplined military muscle and counter the mutterings from an increasingly impatient press corps that the "rag-tag" UF was simply waiting for Uncle Sam to win their war for them. Footage of these training operations was predictably flashed around the globe within minutes. CNN in fact didn't even need to leave home: their cameras could film them on the outskirts of Jabal Saraj from the roof their house.

### On Parade

But the big show though was the parade on 5 November. This was an Afghan military spectacular lasting several hours in which UF brass reviewed the troops and made stirring speeches. Heading a range of political and military heavy-weights were Burhanuddin

Rabbani, still nominal president of the UN-recognized anti-Taliban government; and General Mohammad Qasim Fahim, the new UF commander-in-chief who had inherited the mantle of leadership from slain resistance hero Ahmadshah Massoud (assassinated by al-Qaida suicide bombers two days before the September 11 attacks). Rotund, less than articulate, and singularly lacking in charisma, Fahim, it's safe to say, has a tough act to follow. Cutting a more martial figure was Kabul theater commander Bismillah Khan, a tough and experienced field commander in his mid-late thirties.



(above) Determined Northern Alliance fighters pause for a break. (top) A young Northern Alliance soldier stands guard at a front line position at Bagram Airbase, north of Kabul.

Drawn up across the hillside bearing banners and posters of Massoud was an undeniably impressive array of some 1,500 to 2,000 troops drawn from most units assembled on and behind the front line. Behind them were rows of T-55 and T-62 main battle tanks, BMP-1 and BMP-2 armored fighting vehicles, BRDM-2 scout cars and a couple of BTR-70 APCs. Representing the artillery were BM-21 122mm multiple barrel rocket launchers, several BM-27 9P144 220mm Uragan MBRLs and even one Luna surface-to-surface missile (better known to NATO as the FROG-7) on its ZIL-135 transporter.

Just when the main offensive would come still remained frustratingly unclear though. The cynics reckoned spring or summer of 2002 and several headed home in frustration. But best bets among the combatants and journalists crowding Jabal Saraj's tea-houses said before the holy month of Ramadan. Still others noted that while Washington might be sensitive to the political impact of hostilities during Ramadan, Afghanistan's belligerents have seldom been inclined to let the month of fasting come between them and good fight. But as so often in Afghanistan, best strategy was to quit trying to second-guess and simply sit it out.

Typically when events did move they moved faster than anyone could have predicted. Finally triggering the Kabul offensive was undoubtedly the dramatic upset in northern Afghanistan. As a result of sustained U.S. bombing in the region south of Mazar-i-Sharif city, a sudden breakthrough on that front came on 9 November. Taliban defenses south and west of Mazar collapsed and thousands of fighters simply abandoned the city. Then, hardly less dramatically the next day brought a similar collapse on the northeast fronts screening the Taliban held city of Taloqan and saw UF troops sweep into the city. Within less than 24 hours the Taliban had been routed on both key northern fronts and pushed back into a large but strategically isolated pocket in Kunduz province, backing onto the Tajikistan border.

By late Sunday, 11 November military movements in and around Jabal Saraj indicated clearly that the storm north of Kabul was about to break. Ammunition trucks were busy ferrying crates south through Charikar to the lines; units in rear bases were on the move; and rumors were flying faster than usual. Early Monday morning I took my Russian jeep and trusty

Panjshiri driver, Sakhi, and headed out of Jabal Saraj on the highway past the ruins of the old Afghan Army Second Division base on Red Hill. Slowing through the busy bazaar of Chaikar, the provincial center of Parwan province, we pressed on towards the front, some 15 klicks from town.

### Attack

And all the signs were there. On the highway beyond Charikar an Guards Brigade armored unit was drawn up beside the road, tank crews sitting atop their vehicles in the early winter sunshine enjoying a late breakfast and tea. Each tank had a full complement of 40 rounds of 100mm or in the case of the T-62s, 115mm ammunition. Two or three klicks further south a convoy of troops loyal to the UF's commander Haji Sher Alam was also pulled over by the road side waiting to move.

But they weren't bored: overhead a lone B-52 was making repeated passes, loosing ordnance onto or around the shattered town of Qarabagh, the first major settlement in Talib territory south of the lines. Massive mushroom clouds of smoke, dust and debris were rising a few klicks across the lines. And from fields and farmhouses besides the highway where the UF convoy was pulled over a truck-mounted 107mm MBRL or BM-12 as the Afghans term it was pumping out rockets with deafening cracks. Good entertainment was watching the reaction of some of the western press corps, the majority of whom had never been anywhere near a

war before, as they hurled themselves to the ground at the sound of outgoing fire and then rose sheepishly to dust themselves off amid hoots of laughter from the Afghans.

At that point I took a calculated gamble: On the assumption the main attack was still hours or even a full night off, I gave Sakhi instructions to floor it back to Jabal Saraj — and the nearest generator power where I could pump out a quick story via the satphone that was revolutionizing battlefield communications both for the press and for combatants. Then I packed a rucksack with sleeping bag, toothbrush, first-aid pack and film and along with the satphone and headed back for the front.

There was no mistaking the approach to the lines: straddling the highway were two large containers blocking the road and both packed with explosives to give any Talib armor a solid welcome in the days when a Talib offensive was a constant threat. Beyond the containers was the carcass of a knocked out BMP which had also been rigged with charges. Beyond that was Dorahi and the bunkers and trenches separated by maybe 100 meters.

The jeep swung off the highway at

the first container, lurched down across a dried creek bed and then back up onto the tarmac. Two hundred meters further we again left the highway along a farm track on the left. A five minute drive along a deeply rutted lane brought us to a large mud-walled farmhouse at a hamlet called Rabat that served as a forward command post of the Charikar-based 503rd Brigade of Haji Almaz Khan. While the Bagram sector to the east came under Baba Jan's 515 Bde, it was the 503rd that manned the lines on both sides of the Old Road itself.

I'd visited the post many times in the preceding weeks. Its commander, Arozeh Khan, had become a good friend and source of tactical information while the roof of the farmhouse provided a sweeping view of the highway and the plain to the south. Seeing the exact course of the front between one and two klicks away was more difficult given the walls, ruined houses and trees. But that afternoon the command post had become an assembly point for the impending assault. Jeeps and trucks were parked outside and a strike unit, a couple of hundred troops in Chinese-manufactured camouflage uniforms were waiting. Some of the troops were sitting around in the farmhouse's inner compound checking weapons and equipment; others forming up as platoons outside.

### Battle Begins

One typically Afghan element to the offensive was that there was no zero-hour a single, defining moment when along a 25 klick-long front across Shomali Plain the artillery roared out the battle commenced. It was all far scrapper

and more piece-meal. As I later pieced it together, at Bagram paths through the front-line minefields had been cleared in the early hours and the first infantry units went into action before noon. And by 1100 as noted, the artillery fire on the Old Road was gradually, almost imperceptibly gathering momentum.

At Rabat and on the Old Road the heaviest fighting was going down just as I arrived with fierce exchanges of small arms, mortar and recoilless fire along the tarmac side road that cut across from Dorahi and the Old Road towards Bagram. A shaken Italian photographer I knew returned to the farm house clutching a flak jacket that he'd been holding

*(right) On the road to Kabul. (below) An armored unit of Guards Bde wait for offensive to kick off on road to Kabul south of Charikar.*



*Continued on page 81*



# MILITARY TRIBUNALS: Judge, Jury And American Jihad

## Constitution Takes Friendly Fire

BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

**T**he media has been at its theatrical and hysterical best as it wages a proxy war over the draconian executive order that has become a symbol of the terror, fear, anger and frustration over the barbaric and appalling terrorist massacre of thousands of civilians in the most powerful country on earth.

On September 11 a sophisticated web of terrorists succeeded in devastating icons of U.S. capitalism and power that had taken years to build and develop, as well as killing more than 3,000 U.S. citizens.

On November 13, a Presidential executive order just as summarily collapsed symbols of the U.S. legal system, including the Bill of Rights that guarantees the principle of one's innocence until proven guilty, the rights to choice of counsel, to face one's accusers, to examine the evidence, to demand a trial by jury for capital offenses, to appeal, to writs of habeas corpus — among other principles of justice.

Frank Rich of *The New York Times* warns that "even as we track down a heinous enemy who operates out of a cave, we are getting ready to show the world that the American legal system must retreat to a cave to fight back."

"Bush, as the only president we've got," writes constitutional guru Nat Hentoff in the *Village Voice*, "has taken center stage as he further dismantles the Constitution ... in this executive order he has issued as commander in chief, only he — our maximum leader — will decide in each case who is to be brought before what in the Old West were called 'hanging judges'."

In an Orwellian twist, conservative pundit William Safire writes, Bush's order calls this Soviet style abomination a "full and fair trial" when it is a prescription for "dictatorial power to jail or execute aliens"... replacing the "American rule of law with military kangaroo courts."

Bush's executive order subjects any alien who "is or was a member of al Qaida," who has engaged in, aided or abetted, or conspired to commit, ...or has knowingly harbored an al Qaida operative, to detention and to trial by a military commission.

The proposed secret tribunals, which would be composed of military officers and would have exclusive jurisdiction, would host the trials of suspected terrorists in the United States, in Afghanistan, on ships at sea, or any other venue ordered. Military officers would become prosecutor, judge, jury, defense and executioner. The

evidence, which may be undisclosed if based on classified intelligence, needs only to meet the "probative value to a reasonable person" standard.

Convictions and sentences, including the death penalty, could be imposed by a two-thirds vote of the commission, who can discard the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard. There is no right of appeal to "any court of the United States or any state."

Military tribunals not only lack the protection of civilian courts, they lack the protection of a unanimous vote for the death penalty that courts martial offer.

**Good Acronym,  
Bad Idea?**

A sweeping antiterrorist bill, the *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct*



Terrorism Act of 2001 (U.S.A. Patriot Act) had already given officials powers to conduct secret searches and obtain personal and computer records of anyone found to have any association with anyone who might be suspect, whether citizen or alien.

Further erosion of rights resulted when Attorney General John Ashcroft ordered eavesdropping on attorney/client conversations of suspected terrorists in federal prisons. The ridiculousness of the directive is exemplified by the requirement of giving notice to both attorney and client that they are subject to eavesdropping.

The concern is that "terrorism" has yet to be defined, or even who is to define who or what a terrorist is. Apparently its wide scope reaches from "terrorist activity" to the use of "dangerous devices," to contributing funds to a group whether or not the donor is aware that the group is engaged in terrorism.

Perhaps as Jim McGee of the *Washington Post* suggests, the administration has implemented such drastic means to compensate for the failure of the intelligence community so apparent on 9-11. He quotes eight former top FBI officials as dismissing this new policy as short sighted and lazy law enforcement, and suggesting that the administration is trying to implement quick fixes rather than address shortcomings in the long-term use of surveillance, informants and undercover operations.

In defense of the order, Bush administration officials claim that "terrorists don't deserve the same guarantees and safeguards" of the U.S. Constitution in a civilian trial. Since these individuals are not lawful combatants, Cheney said, "they don't deserve to be treated as POWs." On the other hand, labeling the individuals involved as POWs or belligerents elevates them to the status of soldiers or warriors, a status that the United States may want to, and could, resist.

Justifications for the use of military trials are as numerous as the objections. Military tribunals, proponents argue, are essential in order to avoid the monster that the U.S. legal procedural system has become with its endless protections, requirements, delays, tactics, theatrics and tricks. Certainly, those procedures would have to be modified in the event of a trial in the civil courts under the circumstances.

### **Friendly Fire On the Constitution?**

Secret military trials, whether in the United States or on the battlefield, the argument is, would provide the means to keep confidential, evidence including those of covert operations, in order to further enhance national security — as well as preventing retribution against jurors or judges who might convict a defendant.

In addition, military tribunals, which are not constrained by the Fourth Amendment and which can gather evidence by unorthodox methods, are designed to deal with the problem of insufficient evidence. Debacles such as the fatal error that occurred during the Clinton Administration, it is said, are likely to be averted. In 1996 the Sudanese government offered to arrest Osama Bin Laden in Sudan and turn him over to Saudi Arabia for extradition to the United States. The Saudis refused to take him and the Clinton administration decided it was "lacking a case to indict him in U.S. courts." Clinton's national security adviser, Sandy Berger, told the *Washington Post* "the FBI did not believe we had enough evidence to indict Bin Laden."

Lowering the standard for conviction, proponents of the executive order claim, is meant to resolve problems such as those that U. S. prosecutors face in convicting suspects in

custody that have been linked to the September 11 attacks, when available evidence would not prove their guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt."

The suspects, it is argued, are too numerous to be processed through the regular court system. Over a thousand suspects have been detained, two dozen held as material witnesses, 500 on immigration charges, still others on local, state or federal charges unrelated to the September 11 attacks. Thousands have been captured in Afghanistan and dozens have been apprehended throughout Europe. Stalin, Hitler, Saddam Hussein, the Chinese government, and General Aouf of France with regard to the Algerian conflict, among others, have all made similar arguments in the name of judicial efficiency, before execution of the masses.

Former presidents, including Washington, Lincoln and FDR, proponents argue, authorized military tribunals. Opponents point out conflicting cases that stand for opposite positions.

During the Civil War 13,000 soldiers and civilians were tried before 5,000 commissions, we are reminded. The United States has struggled hard for a century and a half to put the tactics and techniques of the Civil War, including the abuse of horrific internment camps, behind it.

### **Supremes: Civil Courts Open? Then No Martial Rule**

In fact when Milligan in 1866 was sentenced to death by an Army court in Indiana for disloyal activities, on appeal, the Supreme Court ruled "Martial rule can never exist where the courts are open and in the proper and unobstructed exercise of their jurisdiction. It is also confined to the locality of actual war."

Eight Confederate sympathizers were tried in military courts upon order of President Andrew Johnson, for helping John Wilkes Booth carry out the assassination of President Lincoln. After a 50-day trial, all eight were found guilty by a panel of seven generals and two colonels, who by a two-thirds vote sentenced four to hang and four to receive prison sentences. Booth and his co-conspirators had intended to kill Lincoln and Vice President Johnson, and secretary of state William Seward. Had Johnson and Seward also been killed, the Constitution as then written made no provision for choosing a new president, a formula for civic chaos or confusion with parallels to the September 11 attacks, it is argued.

In 1942, in the *Quirin* case in the Supreme Court endorsed FDR's order for military tribunals, holding that eight German defendants were "unlawful belligerents" who had entered the country clandestinely and thus had no rights to a public trial or a trial by jury. The eight Nazi saboteurs, one a U.S. citizen, had landed from submarines in New York and Florida with explosives and instructions, written on invisible ink on handkerchiefs, to blow up targets in Chicago, Detroit, and New York. The Coast Guard took chase, and the suspects escaped to New York City, where two of the Germans contacted the FBI and betrayed the others. In an appeal to the Supreme Court, defense unsuccessfully invoked the Milligan case and all were convicted.

On the other hand, the Supreme Court held that imposing martial law in Hawaii in WWII was unconstitutional.

Military trials, Hentoff points out, have been approved in the past by the Supreme Court only during times of declared war. Before one can properly respond to that argument, the administration would have to clarify with whom it is at war. A war against terrorism sweeps over 60 countries of the globe, with "sleepers" dispatched globally and given freedom in selecting their targets. If the war is against Bin Laden and

his followers, a clarification must be made as to whether he was a *de facto* government with effective control of Afghanistan on 9-11, in which case the United States is acting in self defense, or whether the war is upon invitation of the *de jure* government of Afghanistan, or whether the war is against a worldwide terrorist Mafioso group. A declaration of war in the first two scenarios is not necessary in order to invoke the Geneva Conventions or the Nurembourg Statute or to discuss whether individuals are classified as POWs or unlawful combatants. Under international law since an act of aggression and violation of U.S. sovereignty has occurred, a declaration of war is not necessary. The U.S. courts have repeatedly recognized *de facto* governments and states even if the political department fails to do so, as exemplified by the recognition of the Republic of Srpska in the Kadac vs. Karadzic case. In that case the court sought to bestow official status on Karadzic in order to hold him accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and torture.

So the results are mixed, but if the case is brought to the supreme court, the Court would most likely be deferential to Bush and uphold the military tribunals as it has endorsed prior actions of the executive in times of national emergency. The Senate Judiciary Committee was already plowed over by Mr. Ashcroft in December, and the remainder of the poll-watching Congress will probably follow suit and approve the military trials, in which even the executive is on solid ground if given further approval by the Congress in addition to laws already in place.

### International Implications

I cringed when I read an editorial in the *Washington Times* that said that some of the opposition of military tribunals is "fuzzy-headed," such as concern for the vapor of "world opinion" and that "America must always do what it must do, and 'world opinion' will follow." The "vapor of world opinion" was spelling out warnings far before 9-11 and is currently giving out warnings that the war on terrorism will be thwarted unless the United States respects other legal systems and their constraints.

Hentoff points out that Bush's policy is "particularly dangerous to American citizens arrested by foreign governments on charges of endangering their national security: journalists reporting 'state secrets,' travelers talking to native dissenters, or overly curious visiting academics. If the United States can prosecute and even execute loosely identified 'supporters' of terrorism' secretly and swiftly why can't other countries follow that lawless example in their own interests?"

Not only will the executive order, if implemented, sabotage the objectives which its drafters and proponents are trying to achieve when the United States requests extradition of suspects, but the recent decision to try Moussaui in a jurisdiction which is more likely to impose the death penalty will have just as much negative impact.

Zacarias Moussaui, a French citizen, arrested on immigration charges before Sept 11 after a flight school reported he wanted lessons only on how to steer a plane, has been linked to some of the hijackers through phone intercepts. Reports are that he was to be the 20th suicide hijacker. His presence in the United States avoided any questions of extradition of another country's national, but future cases are bound to pose enormous problems if extradition is requested.

"Nobody could deny that the United States should have primary jurisdiction in the 9-11 cases," *The Washington Post* quoted Robert Badinter, a French senator as saying "But there are two problems. First, the United States has the death penalty.

This is barbaric to Europe. And now Bush wants these special courts-martial, with few protections ... Under the European Convention on Human Rights, it would be illegal for a government here to extradite under those conditions ... Because of the Texas experience, President Bush is known as the world champion executioner. So Europeans were already wary."

### On the Point of Our Own Sword of Principle?

The Council of Europe was established in 1950 with a Convention that reads very much like the U.S. Bill of rights. Although the death penalty is not illegalized in the European Convention of Human Rights, the majority of the members have *de facto* or within their domestic law illegalized the death penalty. The tribunal of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, whose decisions are binding on all of the Council of Europe 43 member states, has ruled that extradition to a country with a death penalty would be a violation of the Convention.

Article 5 of the Convention guarantees the right to a speedy trial and Article 6 guarantees the right to a fair trial, that the accused is deemed innocent until proven guilty, that he has the right to be informed of the charges and to examine witnesses and evidence. Although Articles 5 and 6 may be derogated in times of "war or public emergency threatening the life of the nation," European courts have held that trials must be in Civilian courts if they are operating.

In the 1989 *Soering v. U.K.* case, Soering, an 18-year-old German, killed his Canadian girlfriend's parents in Virginia. He escaped to the U.K. and was arrested for passing bad checks. Soering appealed the U.S. request for extradition to the European Court of Human rights, which held that the U.K. would be in breach of its obligations under the Convention if it extradited to the United States because of the "death row phenomenon." Soering was only extradited after the United States gave assurances that the death penalty would not be imposed.

In the 1995 *Chahal* case, the Court ruled that Chahal, a Sikh activist whom the U.K. was trying to deport to India, could not be extradited because extradition would subject him to the brutalities by the Indian police against militant Sikhs, in violation of the U.K.'s commitment under the Convention.

In addition to the Council of Europe, the European Union, with its 15 members, including the U.K., Spain, France and Germany, where many of the suspects are found, has banned the death penalty, and by extension extradition by a member state to a country that imposes the death penalty. Members of the European Union are very committed to international law, as the European perception is that integration into the European Union has been instrumental in preventing repeats of WWI and WWII.

Other Countries, such as Germany, France, Greece and Austria, ban or resist the transfer of their nationals to foreign jurisdiction.

Spain has refused to extradite 14 al Qaida suspects allegedly linked to Osama Bin Laden and believed to have given the hijackers logistical support, if they are faced with a death penalty or trial by military court.

In the U.K. an extradition request for Khalid Al Fawwaz, Ibrahim Eidarous and Adel Abdel Bary, three suspects in the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998 has been frustrated, although the United States in an extradition hearing provided evidence of two of the suspect's fingerprints on an al Qaida document discussing plans for those attacks. Al Fawwaz, who allegedly ran al Qaida's British operation from

a storefront office in north London according to *The Washington Post*, and his two associates, have successfully fought extradition.

Formal proceedings are in process to extradite Lotfi Raissi, an Algerian flight instructor arrested in London and charged with complicity in training some of the hijackers who crashed a jet into the Pentagon. *USA Today* reports that the United States is seeking to extradite him on charges of falsifying an application for a U.S. pilot's license. If he is extradited to the United States for those lesser charges, prosecution for terrorist activities may be precluded from the court as violations of extradition treaty, as the courts have held that one extradited under a treaty can only be charged with those offenses for which he or she was extradited. The U.K. has refused to extradite to Egypt or other Middle East countries that use military courts and impose the death penalty, and resisted requests from France for extradition of suspects implicated in bombings in Paris.

### The U.S. Will Need International Judicial Help

The process of extradition is a complicated and lengthy one in Europe. The requesting state must produce evidence that shows probable cause to assure the requested state that the charges are legitimate and that extradition is justified. Normally, formal hearings are held and rights to appeal often exist. An appeal to the European Court of Human Rights takes an average of three years.

But the problems of extradition must be faced. As Douglas Frantz and Raymond Bonner of *The New York Times* point out, U.S., European and Pakistani officials have identified new elements of the Bin Laden terrorist network, including a top lieutenant in Europe. At least 11,000 terrorists have been trained by Osama in the past five years in Afghanistan, but may have been dispatched globally, including to France, Spain Italy, Britain, Belgium, and Germany, and given leeway in choosing their targets.

As many as 30 terrorist cells or "sleeper nests" affiliated with Osama Bin Laden are located in Europe. There are 3.1 million Muslims in Germany with around 31,000 affiliated to Islamic organizations, and authorities have identified 3,250 as "potential extremists."

Three of the suspects in 9-11 lived in Germany and reports are that the financial center of Frankfurt may have been used as a logistical base both for operations and for the movement of money that facilitates terrorist operations. Police uncovered an apartment in Hamburg, Germany that was used by Mohammed Atta, the leader of the hijackers that hit the World Trade Center, and of others who died or were implicated in the 9-11 attacks. Germany did extradite Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, Bin Laden's suspected finance chief charged with helping plot the bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa, but only upon assurances by the United States that there would be no death penalty.

Extradition efforts often have been frustrated, according to the BBC. In 1985, Italy refused to hand over terrorists that had taken hostages and killed a U.S. citizen on the *Achille Lauro* cruise liner, and allowed their leader Mohamed Abu Abbas to escape.

Turkey in 1999 was unable to request extradition of terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan from Germany or France, and had to make a commando raid in Kenya

That is not to say that Europe has not made efforts to change the current legal system to accommodate the fight against terrorism.

Europe's police forces have detained those suspected of

terrorist connections in France, Spain and the U.K.. At a crisis summit in Brussels, home of the European Union, officials proposed laws that will enable police and prosecutors in the EU to arrest suspects anywhere on the continent and put them on trial immediately. EU officials want Europol to be transformed into a cross-border police agency with powers similar to those of the FBI in the United States, with a common European arrest warrant and the scrapping of extradition proceedings within the EU. Europol has set up a new Anti-terrorism Task Force to be administered by "Eurojust." Many of these proposals may not be implemented, however, as there is fierce opposition in the member states that mirrors the opposition in the United States to the loss of civil freedoms, BBC reports.

### Middle Ground?

Britain's plan to detain terrorist suspects indefinitely without trial has been likened to internment camps, an idea which failed when introduced in Northern Ireland in the '70s. Unable to extradite these suspects to their home countries if it is in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, the government may imprison these suspects with no trial, no jury for indefinite periods as long as the public emergency is declared. The U.K. proposed anti-terror legislation, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill, which would allow a judge to have secret hearings and mete out secret judgment. Evidence will remain secret and will give police access to communications of all telephone, e-mail and internet users. The fear in the U.K is the same as in the United States — that "emergency laws introduced in the name of national security always begin by being time limited and aimed at a defined minority few, only to later widen in scope and become in effect permanent."

Germany is enacting laws giving police extra powers to eavesdrop and to monitor private bank accounts and deport "undesirables." French police have been given new powers to stop and search citizens at will.

*USA Today* quotes Director of General Affairs at the Council of Europe Guy De Vel, who addresses the problem the United States will face in attempting to gain jurisdiction over European suspects: "Clearly there could be a problem. I can imagine that some member states prefer to prevent such problems by refusing the extradition request rather than be confronted with them."

T.R. Reid of *The Washington Times* quotes British lawyer Nicholas Blade, "If the SAS, the special British troops now in Afghanistan walk into a cave and find Bin Laden first, it may be an illegal act for a British officer to hand him over to your [U.S.] courts."

The "vapors" of world opinion are giving a message through Bob Marshall Andrews, British MP and the BBC:

"As in classical mythology, from the Afghan soil will emerge not our warriors, but warriors who will fight for Bin Laden and al Qaida and whose numbers will multiply. Above all they will be armed with the hatred of the United States which brought them into being ... But I do wish to be constructive and to this end I believe we must create an international criminal court ... we should signal to the world that we expect and desire a judicial end to the conflict. I can think of many reasons why Bin Laden should not be tried in America."

*Dr. Martin Brass is a frequent contributor to SOF.*

Next: An international Criminal Court? ✕

# HOLY WAR COMBAT TOUR

## American Merc Joins The Mujahideen

### PART I

TEXT BY GENE SCROFT  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RON VOLSTAD

*Lance Motley, a.k.a. Gene Scroft, was one of SOF's early combat reporters. He was killed in 1989 photographing Karen defenses when a mortar round impacted next to him. This article is reprinted from the December 1986 and January 1987 issues of SOF.*

Startling me in the eye when I woke up was an Afghan trying to steal my AK from under my sleeping mat. Instinctively, I hit him in the face. Seven men jumped me. In a blind rage, I hit, kicked and punched anything within range. Afghans don't punch, they slap, so I was able to more than hold my own until they got a rope around my neck. I agreed to stop fighting.

I lied.

As soon as the rope came off I started swinging again. The second time they wised up and left the rope on after my hands were tied.

I wasn't going to let these bastards kill me without a fight. Cursing myself for not having a backup piece, I kicked, head-butted and spit blood on anyone stupid enough to get close.

They didn't kill me. They just stole my rifle and ordered two men to take me to a village far enough away so that I couldn't easily double back. I expected a lot of strange things in Afghanistan, but not being held prisoner by the men I came to help.

Earlier that morning I had thanked the village chieftain, Aiop Han, for his hospitality during my two-months stay, which had not been very eventful. I told him I was leaving for Herat with or without his help.

Aiop's men weren't warriors. Their idea of combat was to fire their 12.7mm machine guns in the air to impress their

friends and then hide the gun at the first sign of enemy aircraft. Aiop said that he would provide a guide and donkey for my gear. Thanking him, I then tried to get some sleep. I was awakened by my assailants — Aiop's men.

I had gladly walked for 50 days to deliver weapons to Aiop via camel caravan. Here I was being repaid for my efforts by being robbed.

The town of Morghab, location of a communist garrison, is a five-hour walk from Aiop's village. The chief constantly bragged that he was going to attack Morghab. But he always found an excuse. On one such occasion he whined that he had a stomach ache. I blew my top. I was suffering from amoebic dysentery. After that, I never tried to conceal my contempt for his cowardice.

Four times I accompanied Aiop's men to Morghab to fight the enemy. Each time we ended up drinking tea in someone's house. On one of these visits Aiop was informed that a column of BRDMs and BTRs was about to attack his village. Instead of rushing back to protect his family and property, Aiop took a two-day circuitous route back, apparently hoping to avoid enemy contact. When we finally arrived, the village

was on fire and one old woman had a belly full of 120mm mortar shrapnel. I treated her wounds with the little medicine I had, but she died.

Timidity wasn't unique to Aiop's men. Five kilometers from our village was a large mujahideen camp located inside a huge cave. The enemy could never have found it, let alone bomb it. Stored in this cave were one 14.5mm and two 12.7mm machine guns, two 82mm mortars, three 82mm recoilless guns, anti-tank mines, AKs and plenty of ammunition. With all this firepower I tried to convince them to run frequent raids against the enemy. They didn't even listen. When their village was attacked, they were only minutes away but refused to help.

These events ran through my mind as I was led — still tied — down the trail by Aiop's men. My two "guides" were members of the caravan I traveled with from Pakistan and I had considered them friends. They insisted that Aiop forced them to attack me. This was nonsense. They participated because they wanted to be part of the treachery and were surprised when Aiop had



them disarmed and forced them to bring me to the next village.

When they finally untied me about an hour from the village, I immediately hit one in the face and began to pound on the other one. Grabbing a stick from the trail, I told them to go to hell and started off alone. To my surprise, the two insisted on showing me the way. They were terrified to return to the village without doing what they were told.

Another factor in their decision was the two men on horseback armed with Lee Enfield .303s that Aiop sent to follow us.

I wanted to ambush these SOBs but I couldn't find a suitable position. I waited for them in plain view on the top of a small hill. They wouldn't come close. They stopped at least 100 meters away and motioned for me to continue walking. I didn't budge. They made a wide detour to the head of the trail to urge my guides forward. Not knowing where the hell I was, I had no choice but to follow.

After about four hours we came to a small town on the banks of the Morghab River. Aiop's men disappeared, leaving me at the house of Abdul Aziz. My treatment under Aiop disgusted Abdul Aziz and he agreed to help.

A strange feeling came over me as I rested. It wasn't fear or isolation, though I had reasons to feel both. It was exhilaration. I had come to Afghanistan in late 1984 to experience an intensity of life unavailable in the ordered world. I would justify life by surviving. Until now the pervasive feelings had been boredom and frustration. But by fighting back I had survived Aiop's treachery and the aloneness I felt afterward. My spirits were buoyed by this adventure and I was hungry for more.

Abdul Aziz claimed to be a commander in the Jamiat organization. In reality he was a prosperous rice farmer who commanded two servants armed with .303s. But he was a brave man and agreed to guide me toward Herat.

Our travel party consisted of four men, three horses and a donkey. Guess who got to ride the donkey? We traveled for three days until Aziz turned me over to another mujahideen group. As he departed, I gave Abdul Aziz my compass in appreciation of his help. He didn't understand exactly how to use it, but he liked it because it showed him the direction of Mecca. I'm sure he's a popular man around prayer time.

This new mujahideen group also



agreed to help in my quest to reach Herat. My guide rode a horse and I got another damn donkey. We rode for almost an hour before my escort decided he wanted to spend the day drinking tea with his friends. If I had stopped every time someone wanted to drink tea I'd still be wandering around Afghanistan. I joined the first old man going in my direction. He was going to the village of Nick Ma Ma, a Jamiat commander. Maybe he could help me get to Herat.

### Plans For Revenge

Nick Ma Ma's camp was fairly well armed. I didn't see anything heavier than an RPG-7, but they carried AKs, Iranian G3s, Lee Enfields and even some M1s. They asked me to stay. I was tempted, but decided to continue on to Herat. Nick Ma Ma's men rode on horseback. But there wasn't an extra mount, so I knew I would end up sitting in camp most of the time. Herat was urban warfare. I could get to the enemy on foot.

When I told him about my ill treatment the hands of Aiop, Nick Ma Ma

offered to punish him. While burning for revenge, I knew what would happen. Aiop would apologize, return my rifle and plead for his life. This would satisfy the Afghan sense of justice and Nick Ma Ma would then leave Aiop alone.

This wasn't my idea of justice. I not only wanted to kill Aiop, I also wanted to burn his crops and tents as a warning to others. I doubted that Nick Ma Ma shared my view of revenge, so I declined his offer and continued toward Herat.

After two days of riding, I arrived in a mujahideen camp ringed with 12.7mm machine guns and supplied with Soviet and Bedford (English) trucks, the first vehicles I'd seen in months. It was in this camp that I got my first good look at an AK-74.

I like the idea of a smaller round. The more ammunition you can effectively carry the better. I also liked the sleeve used to align the trigger group parts. It makes the weapon a snap to reassemble.

I didn't see any modern American weapons in Afghanistan. The muj think that their Lee Enfields are American state-of-the-art. I bragged that the M16 is a much better weapon. I should have kept my mouth shut. Naturally they wanted to know why — if the M16 is such a fine weapon — they weren't receiving them from the United States. My explanation of American covert purchases of Chinese weapons didn't convince them. Hell, I wouldn't have believed it either. One box of grenades stamped with "GIFT FROM USA" would do more for our national interests than a million in supposedly covert aid.

Every day that I stayed in this camp the commander would tell me that he would help me *farad* (tomorrow). After





five days of "farad," I took a truck and left. The mujahideen pleaded with me not to go alone, but they didn't offer to help. About 3 kilometers down the road I met a farmer who spoke surprisingly good English. He was impressed to see an American willing to fight for his country and gave me a horse and a guide. It was my lucky day.

### Tracers Over Herat

After three days of hard riding, and numerous guide changes, I arrived in a suburb of Herat, exhausted but happy to be there at last.

Tracers lit the night sky over downtown Herat. I stayed in the house of a lieutenant of Ismail Han, the Jamiat commander of Herat, and observed the nightly spectacle above Herat from his rooftop. Again I was lucky. They gave me a Chinese folding-stock AK and a homemade chest pack that held four 30-round magazines. I left with two guides for the center of Herat.

We walked for two hours, in broad daylight and right under the nose of two communist positions. The Soviet and Afghan armies stay in large camps outside of the city where they feel safe from attack. The positions inside the city are manned by hastily conscripted militia units that take the majority of the casualties. Generally the militia stayed locked inside their positions. As long as we stayed out of enemy kill zones we were safe. Unless, of course, a missile or a bomb dropped on our head.

We stopped to eat downtown in what is known as a committee, a group of about 20 mujahideen. Much of Herat is depopulated so committees can choose from thousands of abandoned homes for their headquarters. While we ate, one mujahideen began calling America an evil, imperialist power. I wasn't in any mood to listen to that garbage. I told him that he listened to too much Radio Tehran and that he

should keep his ignorant mouth shut. I was just about to punch this guy in the nose when another man, Abdul Ahmad, asked me to join his committee.

Abdul Ahmad was about 36 years old and deadly serious about the *jihad*. Most of his family had been killed by the communists and he commanded a committee in the center of Herat. He said that he was impressed with my aggressiveness and asked me fight with him. I gladly accepted.

Abdul Ahmad's weapons consisted of captured AKs, an RPD machine gun and an 82mm recoilless gun. The recoilless was their pride and joy. It's similar to the American 90mm, but is usually fired from a tripod rather than from the shoulder. The 82mm is the biggest directed-fire anti-tank weapon I saw in Afghanistan.

On my second day with Ahmad's committee, a freedom fighter whom I didn't recognize came in and took our 82. When I asked about it, someone said he was borrowing it for an attack. I grabbed my rifle and followed.

It was dark by the time I arrived at the other committee. The darkness allowed me to keep a low profile. I wasn't about to let some commander deny me the opportunity to waste communists because of some reservation about an American dying under his command.

### The First Attack

The master plan was a mystery to me. But I did figure out that the target was a militia post less than 300 meters from a Soviet 122mm howitzer position. I joined the recoilless crew, knowing it would play a major role in the attack. We carried the tube and seven rounds to a house directly across from the enemy position.

I knew that the enemy had the house registered with artillery because it was an obvious attack position and one was already blown down from 122mm fire.

I moved the gun to the garden next door. The garden wall would give the gunner protection while hiding some of the gun's signature.

I had forgotten how loud a recoilless was. The first round landed short and the back blast covered the garden with dust. The second round scored a direct hit. The seven rounds were gone in seconds.

When the last round was fired, the mujahideen started to pull back as I started to move toward the enemy. I turned and yelled at them, "What the hell are you doing? Attack!" They had other ideas. They felt that their mission was over and it was time to go back and brag about their marksmanship. Was this all there was? Not quite. Another group of mujahideen came up the trail and when I yelled for them to attack, they did.

We ran across 200 meters of open field. None of the DePuy three-second rush stuff, just assholes and elbows. We took up a position in a servants' quarters 20 meters from the post. I crawled to the roof with an RPG gunner. I covered him while he opened fire on a road grader, igniting the fuel tank and killing the driver.

I joined the group downstairs and we threw grenades into the post. We weren't getting any return fire so I rushed across to the porch in front of the post. No one followed. I tried to get them to attack by yelling "Allah Akbar" ("God Is Great"), but they didn't move. Alone in a building full of communists, I did the safest thing I knew. I attacked.

Along the elevated porch was a huge set of doors flanked on each side by 6-foot windows. I moved to the other end of the porch, firing through the windows as I moved. Assuming a prone position, I looked around the corner. I could see figures carrying AKs moving into the main building from a low courtyard. I held my fire. The militia doesn't wear uniforms and I couldn't tell if they were enemies or friendlies. If I accidentally killed a mujahideen, I'd end up in front of an Islamic tribunal. *Mullahs* [clerics] are not known for the sense of humor, so I'd probably be shot.

### Friend Or Enemy?

Again firing through the windows, I ran back to the other side of the porch and began yelling "Allah Akbar!" After about a minute, one mujahideen finally decided to attack. He took two steps, tripped, and fell on his face. In time, about 10 mujahideen were on the porch. I could still see the figures mov-

ing around so I asked the mujahideen next to me if they were *dost* or *dushman* (friend or enemy). When he looked around the corner, 7.62 tracers flew past his head. We looked at each other and laughed. I guess we had found the bad guys.

We entered in mass through the front doors. Later, I would teach my committee proper room-clearing techniques, but for now I joined the crowd. We stumbled through the darkness to the windows overlooking the courtyard. Most of the enemy beat a hasty retreat when we opened fire but one poor sucker was caught in his room. Trapped against the wall between the door and the window, he couldn't move an inch. We could see the barrel of his AK sticking out the door but we couldn't hit him. I took aim at the molding around the door and I squeezed off a round when he moved in my direction — and got him in the shoulder.

I was on the right side of the firing line and I could see a man moving around me toward our rear. I couldn't identify him as enemy, so I held my fire. I tried to warn the mujahideen by shouting "Dushman, dushman!" but they were too preoccupied to notice. When he came up the back stairs I wasn't too concerned. What militiaman would be stupid enough to walk into a room full of mujahideen?

He pointed his AK directly at my stomach as soon as he saw me. By the terrified look in his eye, I knew I was dead. Great, killed by a confused mujahideen in my first Afghan combat. I yelled "Dost, dost!" and moved to grab his rifle. This time he aimed at my head. Luckily, another mujahideen came to my rescue by separating us.

I returned to the firing line. Suddenly, tracers flew between my legs. The man who almost shot me came running by, followed by a stream of gunfire that impacted around me. I did a quick 180 and got off one shot at the asshole before he disappeared out the door. I guess he was just a lost commie after all.

The man in the courtyard surrendered when his room caught fire. We jumped through the windows and while one mujahideen took the prisoner, the rest of us ran into the room to collect *gannymat* (booty). We collected a radio, AK ammunition and a Russian map case that I claimed as a personal prize. Three of us carried a carriage-mounted 7.62mm machine gun back to our committee. I reloaded and returned to the post, but the battle was over.

I counted three enemy dead. A

group of mujahideen stood over another body that was making the guttural sounds some dead fish make. He was lying in a pool of blood, back-shot and looking with clear eyes toward the sky. He wasn't a communist; he was our only casualty. I wondered if he took a friendly bullet.

I thought it better not to ask.

Only then did the Soviets open fire on us with their 122s and 12.7s. During the entire battle they didn't lift a finger to help their allies. Afghan killing Afghan is an integral part of their strategy.

This battle taught me a lesson. From now on, I would be the first one in and would shoot anything that moved — Islamic trial or not.

### A True Professional

Near Abdul Ahmad's committee lived a remarkable man. Dr. Amin was the only surgeon in Herat. His English was excellent and he had contacts with some German medical association. He didn't have to be there. With his education and background he could have lived a comfortable life in Europe or in the United States, but he stayed to help his people.



I first went to Amin to get help for my dysentery. He gave me metronidazole and it plugged me up in 10 days. After three months with the runs it was like being reborn. The four prisoners we captured in the last battle were kept in Amin's camp, including the poor bastard who was in the courtyard. He was so full of holes that he had to be helped to the can. All the prisoners were well-treated before they were shot.

One day I was drinking tea with Amin when a mujahideen was brought

in with a nasty leg wound. He had been shot in the calf and both his bones were shattered. The men who brought him in didn't know about tourniquets and he was suffering from severe blood loss shock. His foot was pointing 180 degrees in the wrong direction and I was sure Amin would amputate.

I had underestimated him. As Amin removed the bone fragments and sewed up arteries, his nurse started an IV. Amin frequently had to stop and revive the patient by slaps and hear massage. When he was done, the leg was in a cast and the man was talking to his friends. The work of a true professional.

### A Garden Party

Within two days of my first battle, I was fighting again. Abdul Ahmad decided to attack a communist training school near the governor's house. Our party consisted of 15 mujahideen armed with AKs, RPD machine guns and our recoilless. We climbed over walls and roofs and went thought what seemed like every garden in Herat. We were lost more than once. Abdul Ahmad said that he made a recon the day before, but somehow I doubted it.

We finally positioned our recoilless on the roof, directly across the street from the school. It was about 2300 hours and we could see the enemy in their rooms. We dropped down to a nearby house and captured five communists eating in the kitchen of a well-heeled Afghan. The owner of the house pleaded for his life and said that he often helped the mujahideen. I didn't believe it, but the mujahideen decided to let him go. Strange things happen in this often confusing but bloody war.

Three men stayed with the recoilless and the prisoners while the rest of us moved to a house across the street from the school's main entrance. The owner begged us not to use his house — he was afraid of retribution. In the end we just ripped out his telephone and left him alone. We went to the garden next door where the owner was more than happy to help. We gathered near a garden gate that led to the street and waited for the recoilless to signal the attack.

When the 82 fired, two of us ran across the street. The others stayed in the garden trying to figure out what to do. The man with me, Jalat, was a thief before the war, but he was one of the bravest mujahideen I met. (He was later killed when a 122 missile landed on his house.) I could see the school less than

*Continued on page 80*



# ZIMBABWE'S INTERNAL TERROR

## Sometimes, Terrorists Are Not Groups ... But Government

BY ED DEMUND

*For the past decade, the financially, politically and morally bankrupt regime of Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party has been circling the waste drain of history in ever-tighter orbits.*

After 22 years of rule by Mugabe's ZANU-PF party, the once-healthy Zimbabwe is staggering along the precipice of total collapse like a gut-shot wildebeest trying to swim the brink of Victoria Falls. Chronic fuel and exchange shortages have crippled industry and commerce, and the recent government-sanctioned invasion of thousands of farms have largely lain waste to the only remaining significant source of income, further exacerbating wide-spread food shortages. The UN warns of famine early this year — in the nation once known as the breadbasket of Africa. And while international aid agencies are gearing up to provide food to stem predictable mass starvation, the Mugabe government has, incredibly, forbidden white-owned farms to plant. The nation's road net and rail facilities barely function, a condition that would be catastrophic except that the nation no longer has produce to export.

The effective administration of even a smaller state, even the corrupt administration of a smaller state, requires a certain level of competence, and the Mugabe regime has run hard aground on the frontier wisdom that life is hard — and it's harder when you're stupid. The Mugabe regime's talent for incompetence has compounded the effects of its corruption, but this phenomenon has proved to be a sword that cuts both ways. On one hand, the incredible ineptness of the regime has thus far been the only brake on the nation's total collapse into government-sponsored anarchy, in a scenario where the ruling factions are so corrupt, dishonest and obtuse they cannot even do the wrong things right.

On the other hand, this ineptitude has combined with the endemic corruption of the Mugabe regime to hamper virtually every effort at maintaining an infrastructure and an economy. Only the destruction of his own country in a quest for votes and the brutalization of the political opposition have received presidential attention. One comedic episode may serve to illustrate: When Congolese President Laurent Kabila was assassinated last spring, it represented considerable loss to the Mugabe regime, which was being rewarded for the



*Two unidentified farmers walk handcuffed together to the Chinhoyi Magistrate's Court NW of Harare last August: Twenty-three farmers were arrested and charged with inciting public violence after clashes between land invaders and farmers. A month later, Chinhoyi Member of Parliament P. Chiyangwa was filmed exhorting thugs, "if you get hold of MDC supporters, beat them until they are dead. Burn their farms and their workers' houses ..." He, of course, was not charged.*

14,000 troops it had sent to support him, with various commercial concessions. In an apparent effort to curry favor with Kabila's son and successor Joseph Kabila, Mugabe announced the Zimbabwean Air Force would provide the flyover for the funeral, sending five Chinese-built Shenyang F-6s fighters to do the honors. Mugabe's ZAF brass jostled for position in the

que to pilot these planes, as it represented a fresh opportunity to make one-on-one contacts with a new Congolese regime that was, as its predecessor, considered predisposed to swap favors.

A variant of the MiG 21, the F-6 is fast but has limited range and is slow to refuel. Thus an Antonov tanker had to accompany them as they slowly hop-scotched across Central Africa, and the final refueling was made in the dark. One pilot, a wing commander without recent flying experience, became disoriented and ejected, and his plane crashed. On the return leg, the remaining four planes lost half their number when a group captain misjudged his distance and ploughed into the Lumumbashi airfield, wrecking his craft. The last plane in the group, which because of low fuel could not divert, slammed into that wreckage and hit a tree.

China sent five new F6s — on credit — and Libya sent three MiG-23, also on tick. Of course, no ZAF pilots were trained to fly MiG-23s. All the ZAF's BAe Hawks are grounded for lack of tires and ejector cartridges. Only two Alouette choppers are serviceable, and of the eight Mil 35s the ZAF started with, only one is airworthy. This leaves Mugabe with 12 F-6s, one Cessna 337 (Lynx), six Bell choppers and two Super Pumas. With only one transport flying, the ZAF had to borrow Antonovs from Angola for Mugabe's efforts in the DRC, and these were piloted by Russian pilots with Afghan experience — amid constant reports of Russian mafia involvement in the Congolese arms trade and diamond smuggling.

This episode is but a straw in the wind, however, in a national hurricane that has the entire Zimbabwean infrastructure staggering under the burden of official neglect and corruption. These blind staggers, unfortunately, are but a twitch away from being total paralysis. And amid the national neglect, the government's preoccupation is to hold onto power at any cost - even the cost of the nation itself.

### Abusing His People

When the sectors of the nation such as the military to which Mugabe does give attention are so ineptly run by his cronies, it takes no imagination to realize the sorry state of

the national infrastructure as a whole, in particular areas that do not sustain his brutal power, such as health care and transportation. It is a national tragedy that when the AIDS pandemic began to sweep across Africa, Mugabe was at the helm of Zimbabwe. When national leadership with education and emergency preventive procedures were desperately needed, Zimbabweans got essentially nothing: The incidence of HIV in Harare is now 39%, and as high as 60% in some areas, according to Zimbabwean press sources. Last September the London Independent reported that "last week the UN predicted that half of all 15-year-old boys in Zimbabwe will eventually die of the scourge ... the government's first real admission of the scale of the problem was the imposition of a three percent AIDS levy on all taxpayers and companies at the beginning of this year. It has collected \$7.5 million, but not a penny has been spent." Particularly disturbing are the rapes — some 15 a day reported, but most of them not — by Mugabe's "war veterans." Noted Shari Eppel, of the Amani Trust, which provides victims with emergency kits of the morning-after pill and anti-retroviral drugs, "rapists are usually repeat offenders, so there is a very high risk of infection."

Tonia Jowett, 25-year-old niece of a senior farming official, was gang-raped in front of her husband at their house five miles from Harare. When her 18-year-old sister Laura Wiggins was raped in the same attacks, she was repeatedly asked whether she supported the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. Workers in hospitals and schools, often the first point of contact for victims, have been subjected to brutal intimidation by "war veterans" and are reluctant to report cases, reports Tony Wheeler of the Zimbabwean Human Rights NGO Forum, which keeps a log of violent attacks. "We believe many women haven't come forward because the local hospitals were controlled by the war veterans," said Wheeler.

### Who's Abusing Whom?

Politically inspired violent attacks during the last election reported to the Human Rights NGO Forum, believed to be approximately 35% of those actually occurring, were more



**MDC ward chairman Stephen Chasara was beaten by plain clothes agents at Harare Central Police Station.**



**Farmer Alan Bradley was shot in ambush on his Royal Visit farm in the Virginia-Macheke area 25 November. His wife and two children escaped injury.**

# ZIMBABWE:

## THE RUINS OF RHODESIA

On Monday, 12 November 2001, the Zimbabwean government of President Robert Mugabe, a member of the Shoma tribe and the butcher of innocent farmers, black and white, began his "fast track" land-redistribution program by ordering 1,000 white farmers to leave their farms within three months, to make way for 51,000 black families to be resettled on the white-owned properties.

Trained by the Chinese, during the Rhodesian war against the Chinese- and Soviet-backed terrorists, Mugabe, a hard-line Marxist and psychopath, commanded troops based in Mozambique. His troops were involved in massacres of workers at the Tanganda Tea Estates, and of innocent black farm workers.

Mugabe came to power with the help of British liberals and America's Jimmy Carter government, who refused to accept the results of a closely monitored, fair election that had given Bishop Abel T. Muzorewa the presidency. A new election followed, which put Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, both hard-line Marxists, in power. One of Mugabe's early achievements as the new president of Zimbabwe was to hold a national lottery, ostensibly to give the millions of Zimbabweans a chance to win a huge jackpot.

There Was A Surprise Winner!

By some miracle of Lady Luck, amazingly enough, it was President Mugabe!

The so-called "land-distribution" farce began immediately after Mugabe and Nkomo seized power. The method used at that time consisted of Mugabe and Nkomo, accompanied by their hand-picked thugs, attacking white-owned farms and killing the owners, then installing their killers as caretakers.

Andrew Young, a Carter emissary to Mugabe, gushed to a reporter when asked about the murders, and the properties seized during the attacks, "that couldn't be true! Robert Mugabe is a practicing Catholic and wouldn't hurt a fly!" Asked about Young's statement, Mugabe said, "we Africans wear the white man's religion like a cloak ... when we tire of it, we take it off."

Even during the war, Rhodesia managed to maintain a food surplus, while feeding her own people and several surrounding states. Needless to say, the "land redistribution" spells the death of Zimbabwe's farming and agricultural industry. Time has proven that the squatters and militant groups cannot operate farms. They have neither the technical training nor expertise to step in and take over farms and ranches that have been operational for more than six decades.

The UN World Food Program is already preparing to furnish tons of food to starving Zimbabweans.

Long before Cecil Rhodes' pioneer column entered what was later to become Rhodesia, there were the ruins of an ancient civilization that would become a tourist attraction for South Africans vacationing in Rhodesia after it developed a tourist industry.

After Mugabe and company took over, the Afrikaners remarked, "before Mugabe and Nkomo were in power, we went to Rhodesia to see the ruins of Zimbabwe ... now we go to Zimbabwe to see the ruins of Rhodesia."

In the Shona language, the word Zimbabwe means "Ruins." — Mike Williams

*Major Mike Williams is a former officer in the Rhodesian Light Infantry.*

than one hundred to one against members of the Movement for Democratic Change as opposed to Mugabe's ruling Zanu (PF) party. Incidents of political violence reached a peak April, May and June, just before the election in 2000.

Noted the Human Rights Forum Report, "it is very important to understand that the cases reported ... are not simply examples of electoral violence, but represent gross human rights violations. They involve extra-judicial killings, torture (both physical and psychological), disappearances, and cruel and inhuman treatment. Although we report the violations as crimes in the sense of the criminal law of Zimbabwe, they are also gross human rights violations in both human rights law and humanitarian law."

Amnesty International also issued an investigative report of the goings-on at "the surgery," the establishment of the late Dr. "Hitler" Hunzvi, Mugabe crony and "war veteran." Amnesty International was investigating reports people were being taken there for torture because of their connection to the MDC opposition party. On May 17, 2000 one of the torture victims escaped and was killed while fleeing by a group of people linked to the Zanu (PF). Their report details torture at the surgery that included applying live electrical wires to the genitals and armpits, partial suffocation, piercing of the skin with metal tops and sustained beatings. Although victims reported their cases to the police, up until the 17 May killing, police took no substantial action to curtail the use of the surgery as a site of torture. "Concluded their UK Communications Director Mark Lattimer, 'Amnesty International's researchers were shocked to discover this chilling programme [of] state-sponsored terror.'"

The chilling aspect of the Mugabe regime has continued unabated: unaware the camera was still rolling, Chinhoyi Member of Parliament Phillip Chiyangwa was caught on tape by BBC Channel 4 reporter last September telling young Zanu (PF) thugs, "if you get hold of MDC supporters, beat them until they are dead. Burn their farms and their workers' houses, then run away fast and we will then blame the burning of the workers' houses on the whites. Report to the police, because they are ours."

So burdensome has become Mugabe's rule, that there even have been coup plots among his military: Seven officers and 16 ranks were arrested in December of 1998. When the *Zimbabwe Standard* reported the incident, the editor and a reporter were hauled off for questioning by Mugabe's military. Authorities released the journalists after a week of torture — then arrested the 63-year old publisher Clive Lewis. In 1999 there were riots over rising fuel and food prices (there still was some then), and when trade unions called a series of one-day strikes to protest low wages and skyrocketing prices, Mugabe's solution to that problem was to outlaw unions.

### Too Much To Hide

With a commitment to treating the Mugabe regime as one of the last triumphs of freedom over colonialism, the world's liberal establishment has taken great pains to do everything possible to assist, shore-up, fund or ignore the shortcomings and evils of the Mugabe regime, but his most recent atrocities have flashed across the radar screen of world conscience with a meteoric brilliance that can no longer be ignored, even by the regime's staunchest and most optimistic supporters.

Even Mugabe's erstwhile African colleagues are falling away, some taking pains to distance themselves from what is increasingly regarded as a pariah regime. In what observers have described as the most direct and open criticism of one regional African leader by another, Swaziland's King Mswati

III said in August, that he and other leaders of the Sadc community had to stop Mugabe's "undemocratic" seizure of white-owned farms.

Addressing a press conference in Ludzidzini on his return from a Sadc summit in Blantyre, Malawi, Mswati told reporters, "we have already appointed three heads of state [South Africa, Mozambique, and Botswana] to deal with Mugabe on the land grab issue. We felt that what our colleague is doing was beyond the premise of democracy, and he has to be stopped." Another source quoted by the *Zimbabwe Standard* said, "a week before the Blantyre meeting, South Africa's Thabo Mbeki signaled that he was taking a hard-line stance. Festus Mogae, of Botswana, has been brutally critical, and so has Mozambique's Chissano, which shows that Mugabe is now quite isolated." Regional fears stem not so much from Mugabe's brutal treatment of political opposition, as it does from the well-grounded fear that the once-powerhouse economy of Zimbabwe could drag its neighbors down with it when it totally collapses, as surely it will if Mugabe and his followers continue to hamstring or steal-and-destroy the agricultural and business sectors that are the only remaining sources of national income (aside from wheedling the conscience of John Bull for continuing donations).

### Shunned By His Peers

South African Reserve Bank governor Tito Mboweni recently complained that Zimbabwe's downward spiral under Mugabe was "distressing the southern African region unnecessarily." "I wish to call a spade a spade," he said. "The wheels have come off in Zimbabwe. In a globalised world, no country can behave as if it were an island." Also distressing to South Africa is the swarm of economic refugees. Millions of Zimbabweans have fled the country to South Africa as the political and economic oppression became unbearable. "The biggest impact of Zimbabwe's crisis has been on the value of the [South African] rand," noted economist Azar Jammine.

In spite of the international idealists' high hopes, the inescapable fact that the Mugabe regime was corrupt, dishonest and stunningly inept became apparent early on, when \$44 million contributed by Great Britain for the purchase of white-owned farms, to be distributed to Black veterans of the Zimbabwean war, was squandered buying valuable pieces of property for distribution to Mugabe cronies. The landless war veterans — those who actually were war veterans — are still landless. In violation of the agreements that brought forth these funds from British coffers, even from the onset some European farmers were being forced to sell their farms, which was not supposed to be the case, as there were deemed plenty of properties available that would be willingly sold (it just happened these may not have been the ones Mugabe's cronies wanted). Some farms, of course, were turned over to the great unwashed among Mugabe supporters, and most of these were promptly looted and abandoned by the urban re-settlers who had no idea how to farm. Having the hapless city dwellers tear

down the farms to sell off bricks and building components was not what the program was supposed to entail.

In 1998, the Brits agreed to another land-reform ploy, agreeing to pay for a further 100 farms. Mugabe's response was to demand money for 1,500 farms, about a quarter of all European-owned farms. When Britain learned that these farms would remain "government property" [i.e. Mugabe property], it threw in the towel.

### No Fourth Amendment

After the earlier funds were exhausted, Mugabe began his crusade for outright seizure of land. His government has announced plans to grab 95% of all 4,000 white-owned farms — mostly without compensation. This, of course, makes no economic sense whatever in light of the fact these farms represent the backbone of the country's commerce. But bear in mind that nearly 2,000,000 black Zimbabweans live and work on these white-owned farms as well. These people who work for a living, farm workers and farm owners and managers, represent the greatest source of strength of the opposition MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) party. Mugabe knows he is in political trouble: His thousands of thugs — in and out of government — can only do so much when it comes to rigging votes, intimidating voters and brutalizing an opposition that has been abused in a fashion seldom seen since the early days of Hitler's Brownshirts. However, if Mugabe has his legions of "war veterans" seize these farms, wreck them and turn the mil-

lions of workers and voters into refugees it could well derail his opposition. He has some time left before the election to do this, and every indication is that he is wasting no time.

Having recently corrupted the last bastion of official opposition by replacing three more judges on the Zimbabwean high court with cronies, Mugabe has scant to fear for his political survival except a fair and open vote in this year's elections. To avoid this he must brutalize and neutralize the opposition at home, and get rid of external interference by foreign election monitors, which he is doing with his usual effective crudity. The American observation mission to Zimbabwe's presidential elections were effectively kicked out of the country in September, and a European Union team of 10 observers slated to come were told that they would not be welcome, as well. The expulsion of international election monitors for the presidential election slated for March is no small matter, given Mugabe's history of election violence, intimidation and vote rigging. This development alone threatens to derail any chance of a free and democratic election — and has given rise to calls among the EU for travel bans on Mugabe and his cronies, and a freeze on their assets in EU countries. "The time for less carrot and more stick has arrived," noted Glenys Kinnock MEP in a letter to *The Guardian*.



Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe speaks to the press with Foreign Minister Stan Mudenge (rear) at State House in Harare, September 9, 2001.

REUTERS/Howard Burditt

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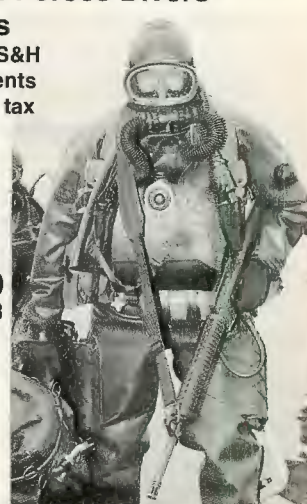
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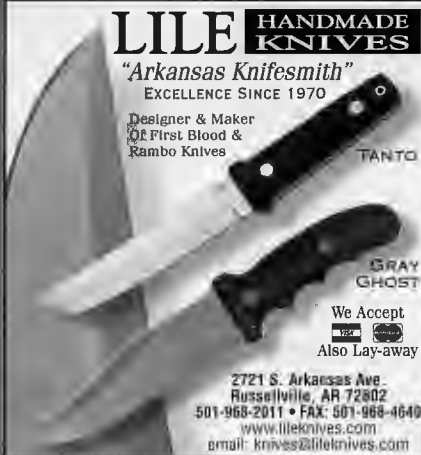
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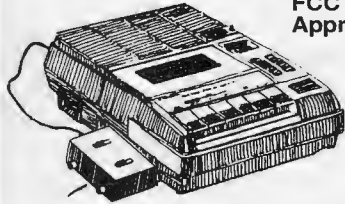
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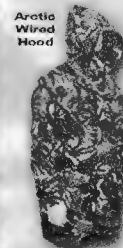
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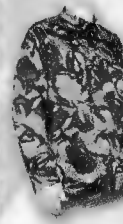
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# ChemBio Warfare For The Concerned Citizen

## What You Need To Know

BY AL J. VENTER

PHOTOS COURTESY AUTHOR

One of the points made by Eric Croddy in his new book about the need for the average American to face the realities of a chemical or biological warfare attack is that for most of us, buying a gas mask is simply a waste of time.

As he says, "if there were an ongoing, clearly identified BW threat – such as the potential anthrax threat facing postal workers, all that is really needed is a surgeon's (or procedure) mask. That's quite enough to filter out the particles that matter."

The same applies to a chemical threat, he told *Soldier Of Fortune* in an exclusive interview following the publication of his latest book: "The likelihood of having the right mask on hand at the right time makes this type of preparation, in my view, impractical." He points out that there are some nerve agents like the Russian-developed Novichok (which means "new guy" in Russian) that can permeate through all known gas masks in use in the West.

More unsettling is the news that there are uncorroborated reports that indicate that one or more Russian scientific rogues might have handed the Syrians specifics about the Novichok formula. Rumor or not, the implications are sobering, if only because Damascus has a history of association with Arab fundamentalists, including the anti-Israeli, Lebanese Hizbollah movement.

Eric Croddy's new book *Chemical and Biological Warfare: A*



*Chemical warfare munitions laid out at Iraq's Al Muthanna State establishment prior to destruction by UN weapons' inspectors. More than 8,000 such munitions were eliminated.*

*Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen* (due out this month) couldn't have arrived at a better time and he has this to say about recent event along the East Coast:

"While it's true that we have to think about clouds of anthrax or mists of sarin, it's just as important that we pay attention to that large truck parked in a suspicious spot." To that he adds a critical rider: "Right now," he says, "I'm actually more concerned with attacks involving conventional weapons than an enemy using chemical or biological weapons. Bullets, explosives and incendiary agents are still the most widely used tools for causing death and

injury." In this regard he points to the genocidal wars in Rwanda where in the slaughter of a million or more, the weapon of choice among the majority was still the machete.

"More salient, in the horrific September 11 attacks that have marked all our lives forever, the instruments of mass murder were not chemical or biological agents," says this youthful-looking academic who originally majored in Spanish but went on to learn to read, write and speak Mandarin Chinese as well as Japanese.

A long time Senior Research Associate at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, his area of focus

has always been chembiowarfare. It says much that he is one of a handful of international sought-after experts on the subject, having discussed armaments issues on CBS, the Fox News Network, NHK Tokyo Television and NPR. He has also written extensively for *Jane's Intelligence Review*. Interestingly, Croddy has been a regular in these pages. From day one he has freely offered his views whenever approached by SOF.

One of the issues that come through forcibly in Croddy's book – and something that he deals with at some length – is that at the present time, around the world, there are certain groups that are fabricating, stockpiling and unfortunately using chemical and biological armaments. As he says, "words that in the not-too-distant-past were obscure and seldom heard – anthrax, sarin, smallpox – have become impossible to avoid."

Also disturbing is his disclosure that Iraq has been playing about with anthrax for years.

In 1986 and 1988, for example, Saddam Hussein's scientists purchased pathogen seed stocks from reputable American dealers for a variety of biological weapons including anthrax, botulism and gangrene, among others. Having signed the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1972, disclosures following the Gulf War indicated that Iraq was involved in a massive biowarfare program: by 1990 it had cultured almost 10 tons of anthrax and 6 tons of botulinum toxin. At the same time Iraq's Daura Foot-and-Mouth Disease Institute produced another 6 tons of botox and 400 liters at Taji.

Concurrently, work was going on at Salman Pak with the large-scale fermentation of *Clostridium perfringens* (gas gangrene). As he says, the work was military orientated throughout and there were even some French-built Mirage jet fighters, complete with modified tanks and spray nozzles that were about to use these weapons against our people had they not been destroyed on the ground during the initial aerial bombardments.

Eric Croddy, the eclectic researcher, makes an interesting observation that contrary to the more popular, accepted wisdom, the United States is not with-

out its own resources to retaliate against some of these weapons of mass destruction.

While President Nixon – in the interests of rapprochement with the Soviet Union – scrapped U.S. biological warfare research programs in 1969, America is very well equipped to retaliate with chemical weapons should anybody decide to use them against us. Indeed, word has just surfaced that U.S. Army scientists haven't been as inactive as some would like us to believe but that they actually produced a lethal, powdered form of anthrax that could be used as a weapon. Officials at the Army's Dugway Proving Ground in Utah did not disclose how long this work had been going on or whether other government was involved in pathogen research.

The legalities of all such actions remain moot. We not only have huge stocks of nerve agents (such as sarin, vx and one or two others that are not public), and we also possess the weapons in storage with which to dispense these poisons. Whether we would actually use them is another matter. Right now, the chemical weapons await destruction, though it's not inconceivable that Washington may have second thoughts about relinquishing a valuable military

asset when there are many other nations are adding to their own chembio arsenals.

Notably, Croddy has allowed *Soldier Of Fortune* access to pictures of some of the weapons in our arsenal: in several cases, this is the first time that they have been made public.

There are some interesting observations in this book. As Croddy says, the term "weapons of mass destruction" – probably coined in 1956 by the Soviet Red Army Marshal Georgi Konstantinovich Zhukov (he of the defense of Stalingrad) – has, like any defining or categorizing word, its shortcomings. It explains some things, but goes only so far. The former Eastern Bloc arms expert Ken Alibek reckoned that something more apt might be 'mass casualty weapons, since their object is to inflict human injury and not destroy buildings or property.

Says Croddy: "Distinctions like this are grim, but they are also useful. They help us define and sharpen our sense of things and to face up and describe in words what would otherwise be overwhelming, confusing, frightening.

Fear is another motive for the study of such disciplines that are both terrible and arcane. One can hardly read a newspaper or listen to the news today



(left) UN weapons' inspectors in Iraq discovered thousands of bombs containing chemical weapons (such as these 250-kg bombs that originally held mustard gas). Many were found to be damaged and leaking in their storage areas. (below) America's 'Honest John' warhead held scores of bomblets filled with sarin nerve gas. They were designed to scatter these munitions near the intended target.



courtesy Soldier Biological and Chemical Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground MD

without and not hear reports about belligerent nations, repressive regimes and terror groups that have access to or are working on the development of some of these weapons. The mere existence of chembio weapons, we are told, poses a significant threat to the stability of international order.

Even if we believe that the nuclear stand-off between superpowers — the Balance of Terror that characterized the Cold War — is a thing of the past, we now have a whole new set of characters to worry about.

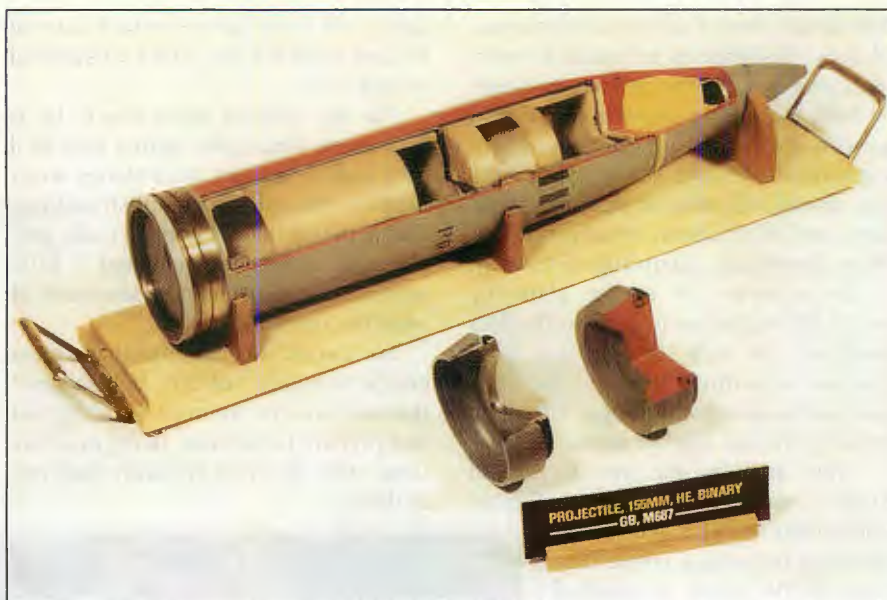
Then he adds the punch-line, by stating that if he were a betting man, I would put my money on the likelihood that we will see chemical or biological weapons attacks in the not too distant future.

Possibly the most disturbing aspect of the book deals with the fact that those interested in developing chemical weapons can, in theory, do so in a farm-yard factory by using non-uncommon precursors that are available locally. These can either be bought from outside suppliers or synthesized from raw materials to which the proliferator has access.

Saddam Hussein clandestinely succeeded in structuring an entire WMD industry on this basis, and that - to the surprise of even the most advanced intelligence groups which included the British, the Israelis and Washington - only came to light after the Gulf War.

Worse, there is a considerable body of evidence that he has continued in these pursuits. So, too, have the mullahs of Iran.

Many of the chemicals that people like the Iraqi and others involved in



*Although standardized in 1976, the US military only produced the M687 binary (sarin) 155mm projectile in the late 1980s. Interestingly, America has a lot of these gasses stockpiled.*

such nefarious employ are referred to in the argot as 'dual-use' compounds. What that means is that they have legitimate commercial uses as well as applications in the production of armaments.

In the case of biological weapons, one of the problems with dual-use technologies (other than dual-use precursors) is what challenges those investigating its proliferation.

In Iraq's case, UN weapons' inspectors often found factories with large fermenters which might otherwise have been used in yeast cultures (or breweries, for that matter). The Iraqis were so well informed about the movements of these officials that they knew long

beforehand when a specific facility was to be visited and would go to great lengths to sanitize this equipment of any traces of, say anthrax spores.

Similarly, on encountering a plant used in aerosolizing, Saddam's scientists would maintain that they were perfecting equipment to be used in agricultural spraying. Thus, much of the equipment, knowledge, technology and infrastructure required in medicine and agricultural disciplines can be put to peaceful use or for making weapons of mass destruction.

Moreover, as Croddy points out, "newly advanced techniques for sterilizing contaminated equipment now help BW proliferators to do a better job converting equipment back to its legitimate purpose and investigators now have a much tougher time definitively proving that a particular facility was used to test or develop these armaments."

The same principles apply to Russia. In spite of Presidents Bush and Putin having become kissing cousins, Washington intelligence sources maintain that work on both chemical and biological weapons goes on, though at a much-reduced scale from what it was before.

We know that in 1992, the then President Yeltsin finally admitted that the source of the Sverdlovsk (today Yekaterinburg) anthrax outbreak had been an accidental release of spores into the atmosphere from a military BW facility. But even then the writing had been on the wall a while and steps



*Iraqi R400 nerve agent aerial bombs found at the Al Wahid air base. The intention, obviously, was to deploy them against allied forces. Iraq also filled this type of ordnance with anthrax spores.*

had already been taken to convert some of these institutions to produce legitimate products for the civilian economy.

Still, the notion persists that things aren't quite as they appear to be. There are known BW and CW weapons plants that remain off-limits to joint investigations and the situation remains unclear. More disturbing, according to Croddy, is the existence of earlier plans by Soviet BW scientists to genetically alter smallpox, as well as evidence from Russian scientific literature that suggests some state bodies might have continued with this kind of work.

"This includes the introduction of Ebola and Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis (VEE) genes into smallpox to create a whole new kind of BW agent, a so-called chimera virus." As he states, this would not only resist treatment, but also have synergistic effect.

It's worth noting that according to Ken Alibek (who was interviewed for SOF in the past) a strain of a combined *ectromelia* (mousepox, a close relative of smallpox) and VEE genes, created symptoms of both diseases in laboratory animals in the late 1980s. In fact, he is convinced that this BW-related research work still continues in Russia despite presidential decrees banning all such activity.

In his chapter head "Threats and Responses," Eric Croddy takes a careful look at the reality of many of these threats and how they are likely to affect our lives for the future. He also offers some useful hints, stressing that anybody using this stuff is faced with some powerful obstacles.

With anthrax, for example, it's not enough to have weaponized this pathogen. "Even if the terrorist has a large quantity (tons?) of this material and even if they are able to store it in such a way that it stays dry and suitable for dispersal over a wide area, they still have the problem of delivery."

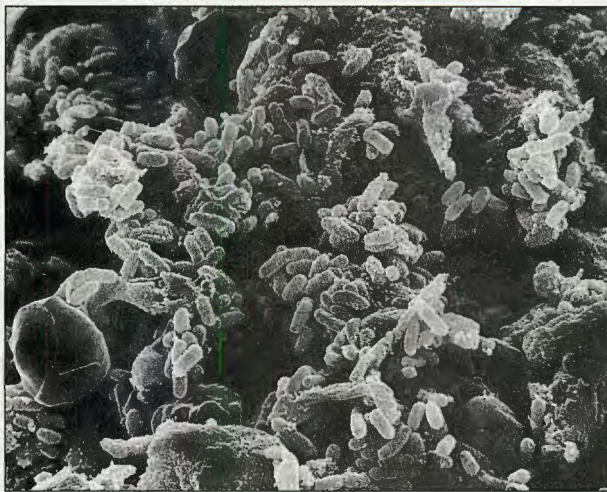
And therein lies the rub, because to achieve the required objective of wiping out half of Los Angeles or Chicago, it has to be dispersed in a 'perfect cloud' over the target population.

"Rain would present a problem (it is a very good dilutant and would help lessen the effect of most CBW agents, even those CW agents that don't hydrolyze very quickly) and wind even more so. Even intense sunlight would negate the lethality of the

agent. All these factors would have to be just right for the attack to succeed on any scale."

On any kind of mass attack, he is even more forthright, stating that he'd be a fool to say that such things won't happen. "But if I accomplish nothing else with this book, I hope to make people a little less terrified and a little more realistic in their assessment of what the risks are."

For a start, he maintains that a mass attack is *highly* unlikely but suggests that as a society, we need to be vigilant and prepare for attacks. Being in a constant state of terror certainly isn't one of them.



Mouse spleen infected with *Y. pestis* (plague) - these have been enlarged 9,200 times with an electron microscope.

"A lot of people have said that if we live in unending terror, then the terrorists have achieved a kind of victory."

Another issue dealt with is whether to buy a gas mask? Here, he states, the situation depends solely on the threat, because the threat changes from one agent to another.

"For chemical threats, the likelihood of having the right mask on hand at the right time makes this kind of preparation, in my view, impractical. For example, in the case of a cyanide gas attack, an exceptionally well fitted and specialized filter protective mask is effective, but the filter must be of the right type and fresh to be worthwhile. And, of course, this mask would be of no use against agents like mustard and VX (blister and nerve agents, respectively), since they act through the skin."

What should be known is that different agents act in different ways. Apart from VX and mustard (which also act through the eyes), most other chemical agents take the more typical pulmonary route. Only one biological

toxin ( $T_2$ ) is active through topical skin contact. Some agents such as *Francisella tularensis* (tularemia) can also infect through broken skin, as does the cutaneous form of anthrax. Often, we may have abrasions or cuts that are not very perceptible, but may be enough to allow ingress of some pathogens and infections could result.

Another issue that has been debated in the media is whether our water supplies could easily be contaminated. Croddy tends to dismiss the threat. As he says, 'water supplies (in the US at least) are remote, meaning that it would take a long time for an agent introduced into the system to reach the end users, by which time it would be so diluted that it would have little or no effect. Moreover, most US water systems not only chlorinate and aerate their water supplies, but are constantly monitored and checked for foreign substances that have been introduced to the system.

Croddy's final words deal with an aspect that has been given little publicity: that people involved with chemical or biological weapons are possibly the most susceptible to themselves being infected. Even the Russians - with their space age technology and laboratories - made some serious mistakes. One would have thought that this was even

more likely in some of the developing countries - Syria, Libya, Iran, Iraq, none of them renowned for technological progress - where research into these weapons goes on.

"Many Iraqi soldiers were injured or killed during the Iran/Iraq War through the unsafe handling of their own chemical weapons. The CW agent VX, for instance, is so toxic that the utmost care and refined technique would be required to use it in any form. And the potential BW agents tularemia and Lassa Fever, caused by a bacterium and virus respectively, are notorious for causing laboratory-based infections and would also be very difficult to handle safely.

"So the inherent danger of these agents is, in itself an obstacle to their wide use," he declares.

"And that's a powerful plus!"

*Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen*, by Eric Croddy, with Clarisa Perez-Armendariz and John Hart: Copernicus Books, New York 2002 ☒

# SMALLPOX: A SCOURGE RETURNS?

BY AL J. VENTER  
IN WASHINGTON DC

## The New Age Bioterrorist Threat

"In a maximum security facility in Atlanta, the world's most dangerous prisoner sits in solitary, awaiting execution. Wanted for the torture and death of millions, this mass murderer was captured in a global dragnet lasting more than a decade ..."

—Dr Jonathan Tucker introducing the smallpox virus in his latest book *Scourge: The Once and Future Threat of Smallpox*

**IF** I could lay money on it, I'd wager that the anthrax trail is eventually going to lead us to the door of Saddam Hussein. And while that hypothesis is going to take a bit of time to prove, watch this space!

Meanwhile, it's smallpox that's in the news again. Once more the Middle East is the locus. Countries involved in offensive biological warfare research programs again include Iraq. Others named as having access to the deadly *Variola major* virus for military use are Iran, North Korea and of course, the Russians.

It's Iraq that interests Dr Tucker the most. In his book, just published, he discloses publicly for the first time that following the Gulf War, UN officials determined that Saddam's scientists had manufactured smallpox vaccine and had immunized its troops with it. The weapons inspection teams that were involved in Iraq and conducted inspections of suspected Iraqi biological warfare facilities from April 1991 to November 1998 were known as UNSCOM, now defunct.

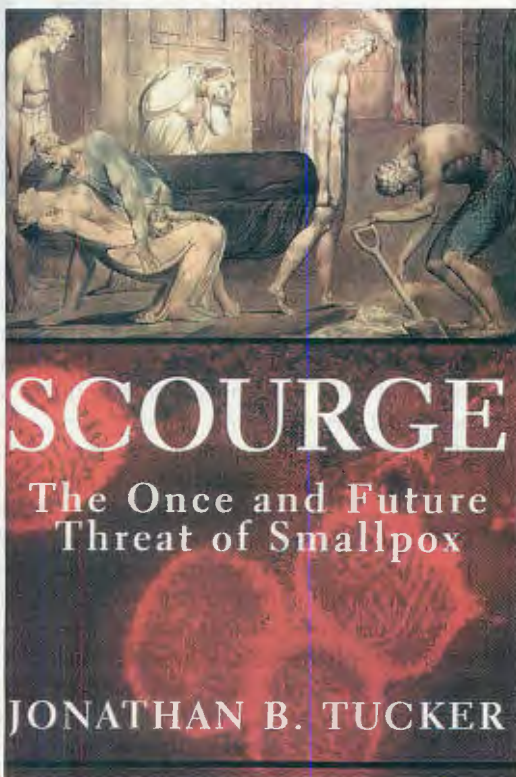
While that Iraqi act was not necessarily incriminating - because the U.S. military had continued doing

so until 1990 - "suspicions were further aroused when Hazem Ali, a senior virologist involved in the Iraqi biowarfare program admitted having studied camelpox virus," Tucker added.

While still in Iraq, United Nations weapons inspectors discovered that Baghdad had manufactured smallpox vaccine as late as 1989, or more than a decade after the disease was vanquished. Suspicions were further aroused when Hazem Ali, a senior virologist involved in the Iraqi biological warfare program, admitted that Saddam instructed his germ warfare specialists to study camelpox virus which causes fever and skin rash in camels. Because camelpox rarely infects humans, some analysts believe that Iraqi scientists may have used it as a surrogate for smallpox in order to refine their production techniques and to look at the possible dissemination of the virus as a warfare agent.

"Further evidence for Iraqi military interest in smallpox surfaced in the mid-1990's when UNSCOM inspectors visited the maintenance shop of the State Establishment for Medical Appliances Marketing, a branch of the Iraqi Ministry of Health that had been involved in the biological warfare program," he writes, adding that it was during that inspection UN inspectors found an old freeze-drier labeled 'smallpox' in Arabic.

"Though the Iraqis claimed that this piece of equipment had been employed for the production of freeze-dried smallpox vaccine, it could just as easily have been used to convert a liquid suspension of Variola virus into powder form for dissemination as a fine-particle aerosol," says Tucker.





Once aerosolized, this powder – whether it be anthrax or smallpox – becomes the ultimate biological weapon. In that form it is easily sprayed over a sleeping city such as Seattle or Sydney.

One of the reasons that international terrorists might be tempted to use smallpox as a weapon is that the United States stopped vaccinating its civilian population in 1972 and all other nations followed suit by the early 1980s. Since smallpox vaccination provides full immunity for only about 10 years, nearly the entire U.S. population is now susceptible to infection. At greatest risk would be the 120 million or more Americans – roughly 45% of the population – born since routine vaccination ceased.

Given this vulnerability, the CDC has warned that even a limited terrorist release of the smallpox virus would constitute a major emergency and – in the absence of sufficient stocks of the vaccine worldwide – could potentially result in the return of smallpox as a global health threat.

Suddenly, after decades of smallpox being a non-issue, Western intelligence services are again focussing on its use as a weapon of mass destruction. The U.S. government is taking the threat seriously enough to prepare the nation for a possible germ attack in which smallpox might be involved. Fears have been voiced that it might emanate from a country in the Middle East.

Dr. Tucker, director of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, says that while the disease was eradicated, laboratory stocks of the virus continue to exist and may have fallen into the hands of rogue states.

“Obviously smallpox is tailor-made for use by terrorists as a weapon of mass destruction,” he told *Soldier Of Fortune*.

He quotes a DIA intelligence report from May 1994, stating that virologists from one of the Soviet Ministry of Defense’s military microbiology institutes transferred smallpox virus cultures to Iraq in the late 1980s or early 1990s. He goes on to say that the Russians “assisted the Iraqis with their biological warfare program. In addition, the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) spotted a (Soviet) Vector scientist in Baghdad in 1991.”

Since the virus no longer exists in nature, the only way that terrorists could acquire seed cultures would be



*(above) Some of the containers used to cultivate anthrax at Al Hakam in Iraq. This site was later demolished under the supervision of UNSCOM. (below) A stainless steel container with electronic monitoring equipment used in Saddam’s biowarfare program at Al Hakam.*

on the international black market. For this reason, Dr Tucker believes that smallpox would be an unlikely weapon for ordinary terrorist groups, but rather, state-sponsored operatives such as Iran or Iraq might obtain it. Once terrorists managed to acquire and produce the virus in liquid form, it would be a relatively easy matter to disseminate it with a small aerosol device, for instance, in an enclosed space such as the London Underground or the New York City subway. The pattern of infection that then emerges is chilling.

Two weeks later, the first victims would come down with fever, aches, and other nonspecific symptoms before developing the distinctive pustular rash. By the time the first patients have been diagnosed, they would have already infected the next wave of cases.

“It is an agonizing way to die,” said London’s *Times* earlier this year in an article headlined “Smallpox: The New Bioweapon.”

First, it reported, “there is fever and dreadful aching pains. Then come the pus-filled boils, which appear all over the body and develop scabs. Slowly, inexorably, the immune system surrenders...”

Professor Vincent Fiscetti, head of the Department of Bacterial Pathogenesis and Immunology at The Rockefeller University, observed that in a mass transport environment, there are people from all over the world. ‘It takes several days for the symptoms to show, by which time they will have carried it back to their own countries,’ he reckoned.

Prof Fiscetti maintains that an even more effective delivery method would



be to use a low-flying aircraft to disperse an aerosol of the virus over an international event like the Olympics or a World Cup football game or, unthinkable, those making the Haj to Mecca. Geographically small countries such as Israel and Jordan would be especially vulnerable.

Because of fears that smallpox could be used as a terrorist weapon, Washington recently announced that it is pouring money into developing new drug treatments for the virus and is also expanding its supply of smallpox vaccine. Unconfirmed reports state that some American Special Forces are being inoculated against the disease.

The West – and America in particular – is taking the threat seriously



*Biowarfare scientist in protective clothing at USAMRIID facility at Fort Detrick, Maryland.*

enough to gear up against its use. Dr Tucker said that there are currently only about 7.5 million doses of smallpox vaccine in the US stockpile, yet epidemiologists believe that at least 40 million doses would be needed to contain an outbreak resulting from a bioterrorist attack. In view of this shortfall, Washington recently launched a program to bolster the US civilian vaccine supply.

Last September, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta awarded a contract to the pharmaceutical company Acambis, a small biotech company of Cambridge, Massachusetts - owned by Britain's Peptide Therapeutics - to deliver 40 million doses of smallpox vaccine.

As we go to press there is more good news. Tommy Thompson, Bush's health and human services secretary disclosed that the production of vaccines would be further upgraded by the end of the year. He asked Congress for \$509 million to speed production to make an additional 250 million doses available within a year. In a comparatively short time, he said, there would be enough for every American.

Although individual batches will expire after about five years, the old lots will be retained because the shelf life of the vaccine is almost unlimited when it is stored in sealed vials at sub-zero temperatures.

Because smallpox vaccination is associated with a significant risk of complications - particularly in people with eczema or a suppressed immune system caused by HIV infection, pregnancy, or cancer chemotherapy - the CDC apparently doesn't intend to start

vaccinating people except in the unlikely event that an actual case of smallpox is confirmed.

The most feared of all infectious diseases, smallpox was first described in ancient Egypt and gradually spread throughout the world. Over the centuries, it caused hundreds of millions of deaths. Smallpox killed rich and poor, royalty as well as commoners. It repeatedly changed the course of history. Highly contagious, the smallpox virus spread through the air, and only a few particles are sufficient to infect. The more potent form of the disease, called *variola major*, killed about 30 percent of its victims, and the survivors in the past were almost always disfigured with ugly scars.

More than 20 years ago, a worldwide vaccination campaign organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) successfully eradicated the disease. The last natural outbreak of smallpox occurred in Somalia in 1977. Three years later, the WHO declared the disease extinct and urged all member-countries to halt routine vaccination because it entailed a significant risk of complications.

The eradication of smallpox was a remarkable public health achievement that in theory, at least, freed the world from a terrible scourge.

Even after smallpox was eliminated from nature, however, some countries retained laboratory stocks of the virus for research purposes. Although Soviet leaders had been the driving force behind the WHO smallpox eradication campaign, they cynically exploited the world's new vulnerability to the disease

by turning it into a strategic weapon.

During the 1980s, the Soviet army mass-produced the smallpox virus as a biological weapon. Tons of the virus in liquid suspension were stored in refrigerated tanks; in wartime, the agent would have been loaded into aerial bombs and ICBM warheads targeted on US and Chinese cities.

Dr Ken Alibek, who served as First Deputy Director of Biopreparat, a major component of the Soviet biological weapons program, revealed Moscow's mass-production of smallpox to Western intelligence agencies after his defection to the United States in 1992. He also claimed that stocks of smallpox virus had been distributed 'to places in Russia beyond the known laboratories - possibly where there was less effective security controls.'

Alibek added that while smallpox was an effective weapon, Soviet scientists had attempted to make it even more deadly by adding foreign genes from other viruses such as Ebola. Specialists at a Johns Hopkins University conference on bioterrorism last year said that much of Dr Alibek's information had been confirmed by other sources.

Dr Joshua Lederberg, a Nobel laureate in biology who advises Washington on germ warfare, commented that 'we have no idea what may have been retained, maliciously or inadvertently, in the laboratories of a hundred countries from the time that smallpox was a common disease.' These would be the most likely sources of supply for potential biowarfare terrorists, he added.

Interestingly, in 1996, the World Health Organization (WHO) agreed to destroy all of the stocks of smallpox virus stored in two official repositories at the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta and the Vector laboratory near Novosibirsk, Russia.

Because nobody was certain that other countries did not retain undeclared samples of the virus, however, the US persuaded the WHO in 1999 to delay destruction of the official stocks for another three years in order to conduct more research on the virus and to develop anti-smallpox drugs.

Mike Hammer, a spokesman for the US National Security Council in the Clinton era said that because of escalating concern about the threat of bioterrorism with smallpox, Washington didn't want to take any chances.

*Al J. Venter is a frequent contributor to Soldier Of Fortune Magazine.* ✕

# SOCOM'S

## AMAZING ENHANCED CARBINE



## America's Newest Weapon Against Terror

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

As we go to press in the wake of the war in Afghanistan, American SOCOM forces were rushed in theater armed with the standard Enhanced Carbine and the CQB version, both equipped with the S.I.R. system. These weapons should eventually be issued to all elements of our Special Operations Forces.

The newest Selective Integrated Rail system is being tested with SOCOM's Close Quarter Battle Component.

A rifle ahead of its time, Eugene Stoner's AR-10 was a milestone in technology and materials when it was developed during the mid 1950s. Even so, during its journey down the path of small arms evolution, the AR-10 began to experience a series of sidetracks that would take it and its AR-15 descendant off course during the years that followed. The carrying handle was the first of these sidetracks.



Here the S.I.R. equipped CQB component is seen with Litton's new AN-PVS17 night vision device and PEQ-2 laser.

Incorporated by Gene Stoner to protect the AR-10's vertical cocking lever, the carrying handle was retained by Armalite's small arms designer, Jim Sullivan, when he scaled down the AR-10 to use his new .222 Special (.223) cartridge. Called the AR-15, the initial .223 prototype used the AR-10's inverted cocking lever and thus the carrying handle. However, even after Sullivan abandoned Stoner's early cocking handle and moved it to the rear, he left the carrying handle on the rifle, and why not?

Most other new assault rifles had carrying handles and in terms of what was in vogue at that time it wasn't a bad idea, but today it's a different story. Now the carrying handle is not only a safety issue, but until recently has also prevented the M16 from meeting military rifle requirements of the 21st Century.

Another major area where the AR-15 strayed from course is in using the barrel as a mounting platform. Even using the sling as a shooting support causes the barrel to bend to the side resulting in poor accuracy, and supporting the handguards on a hard surface produces a different point of impact from resting it on the hand. When the AR-15's barrel began to be used to support the 40mm grenade launcher things got even worse. This remains a serious problem with the current M4A1 Carbine where accuracy acceptance standards have continued to be lowered in order to get the gun to meet specifications.

Besides the extra weight on the lightly supported barrel is the matter of heat. Military sources report that using systems that contact the barrel, the M4 barrel can plasticize (soften) in rapidly firing fewer than five 30-shot magazines on full automatic. In other sustained fire scenarios the heated receiver has reportedly warped allowing the barrel to droop enough to prevent the bolt from locking, and cracking. Adding to the problems experienced by the M4A1 Carbine is the fact that the support system in place to keep the M16 rifle and XM177E2 (CAR-15) weapons running during the Vietnam Era is no longer in place. Even though the M4A1 is basically an excellent weapon the system remains beleaguered.

In spite of these problems, 21st Century Main Battle Rifle (MBR) requirements have been established by the Department of Defense's Land Warrior Group in conjunction with the U.S. Special Operations Command Special Operations Peculiar Modification Program (USSOCOM SOPMOD). The USSOCOM includes

the U.S. Navy SEALs, U.S. Army Special Forces and Rangers. Not only are these requirements meant to solve many of the current shortcomings of the M4A1, but also to catapult the weapon well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as a state-of-the-art system.

### The SOPMOD Upgrade Block II

Called the Block II Upgrade, this program consists of modifications and improvements to the M4A3 to ensure enhanced reliability, accuracy, zero retention, ergonomics/man machine interface, a reduced cyclic rate and an increased service life of 15,000 rounds. A summary system description includes the following requirements:

1. Enhanced Carbine (the basic weapon).
2. Special Purpose Receiver (SPR), a .223 sniper component (now a complete rifle).
3. Over The Breech Receiver (OTBR), a wet/underwater capability (a pistol caliber component).
4. Close Quarter Battle Receiver (CQBR), a short barreled version.
5. Enhanced Shotgun Module (ESM) for door breaching/less than lethal applications.
6. Enhanced Combat Optical Sight (ECOS), a multi-purpose illuminated reticle sight.
7. Image Intensifier Module (IIM), a night vision device (NVD) capable of being used with the ECOS.
8. Thermal Image Module (TIM).
9. Digital Daylight Image Video Module.
10. Rangefinder Module (RM).
11. Integrated Pointer-Illuminator Module (IPIIM), an improved laser capable of visible and IR operation.
12. Heat Source Detection Module (HSDM).
13. Battery Recharger/Blasting Machine (BRBM).
14. Laser Protection/Protection from Optical Augmentation (LPPOA), a hi-tech filter system.
15. Muzzle Brake/Suppressor. The OPS, Inc. suppressor and others are now in user evaluation.
16. Sustained Fire Assembly (SFA), a belt-fed LMG upper for the M4 lower receiver group, such as the ARES Shrike.
17. Chamber Bore Sight (CBS).
18. Enhanced Bayonet/Field Knife (EBFK), a new utility knife to attach to the barrel.
19. Shot Counter (SC).
20. Improved 5.56mm Ammunition.
21. Enhanced Grenade Launcher Module (GLM).
22. Integrated Carbine (IC), a long-range future alternative to the OICW.
23. Sensor Fusion Module (SFM), a sensor fusion imaging/aiming capability.
24. Improved 40mm Grenade and Other Enhanced Indirect Fire Munitions (EIFM).

### The Selective Integrated Rail Systems

One of the key requirements of the Upgrade Block II is an element that is



*The best groups were fired using a Burreis 6X Mini Scope mounted in A.R.M.S. Throw Lever rings.*



*The S.I.R. Systems (below) are seen with the KAC Rail Adapter System (RAS) with which they are now competing in the USSOCOM.*



*Here the spring activated rear sight is shown locked down. Once released, the sight cannot be accidentally folded down.*

the very heart of the program. In the text it is described simply as a "barrel assembly that increases accuracy, maintains accuracy longer, and rigidly mounts four quadrant MILSTD1913 rails to retain zero within .5 MOA objective to 1 MOA threshold." Although several assemblies have been tested by USSOCOM units during the past several years, a brand new one has been developed that is a very strong contender in current competition.

Called the Selective Integrated Rail (S.I.R.) System, the new component is from A.R.M.S., Inc., and is compatible with Mil-Std. M1913 Picatinny flattop receivers. Mil-Std. M1913 flattop

military version of the S.I.R. System extends forward to provide its own continuous M1913 rail all the way to the gas block/front sight. Used in conjunction with a separate folding M16A2 rear sight the system provides the correct height to mate with either the standard front sight, or a new Folding Front Sight being tested with the Enhanced Carbine Program. When unlocked via a lever, the S.I.R. System rear sight automatically springs up into position where it stays (an airborne requirement).

Where the military S.I.R. System clears the front of the upper receiver, it extends from behind the barrel nut down around the barrel on either side

unlatching the détentes the handguard is moved forward about one inch where it clears the rail sections and drops off. In its place can be mounted SOPMOD's new Enhanced M203 40mm Grenade Launcher Module, Enhanced Shotgun Module or other accessories, all of which also avoid any contact with the barrel.

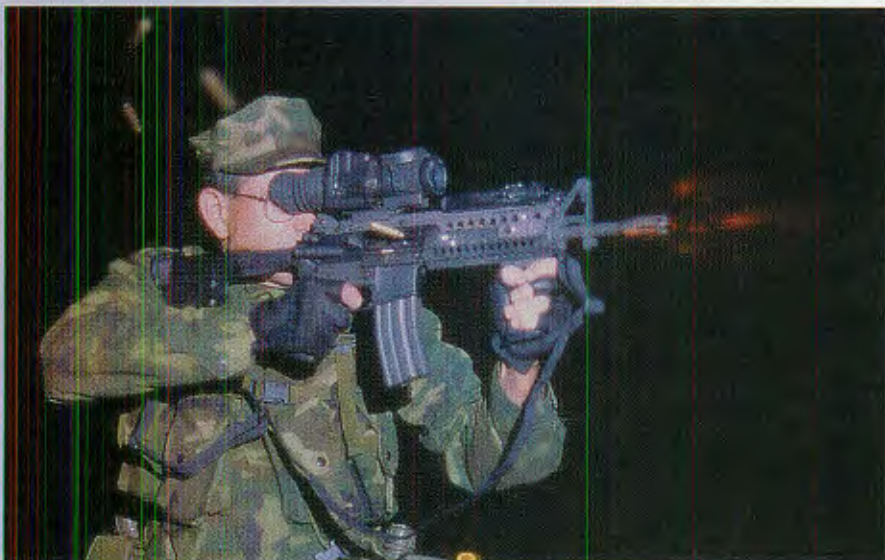
### Free Floating Barrel

With the lower handguard removed, M1913 accessory rails or a vertical foregrip can be quickly mounted at various intervals along the bottom of the S.I.R. and instantly mounted along either side. When the handguard is reassembled onto the system, the side accessory rails are automatically rigidly locked into the rails to become part of the handguard. An A.R.M.S. designed vertical foregrip mounts on the bottom rail. Even the new ambidextrous sling swivel mounts on the S.I.R. System and never touches the barrel, and having nothing touch the barrel of the carbine is vital for two reasons.

The first reason is accuracy and, since the S.I.R. leaves the relatively flexible barrel totally free floating, it not only enhances accuracy, but also prevents interruptions in accuracy and point of impact (POI) by things that contact or pull on the barrel. Second, is heat, and all other handguard mounting systems either contact the barrel group at both the front sight and barrel nut, or at the barrel nut. Since the barrel nut is close to the main area of heat dissipation in front of the chamber, heat is rapidly transmitted to the handguard. If the system contacts both the barrel nut and the steel front handguard cap (near the gas port) heat travels from both directions to build up extremely fast. Not only does this heat up the handguard, but also compounds heat buildup along the barrel resulting in the problems mentioned earlier.

Since the S.I.R. System's contact begins on the flattop well behind the barrel nut, not only does it not contribute to heat buildup, but it also helps remove it by its use of vent holes along the handguard portion. Although these holes are numerous, they are too small to inadvertently insert a finger to contact the barrel or gas tube. If the unit fills with mud or debris, it can quickly be flushed out as is, or be cleared by removing the lower handguard.

As with the sensitivities relative to the SOPMOD Program, so it is with the S.I.R., and there is a number subtleties about the system I have agreed not to



*.223 brass flies as the camera catches Gil Angelotti firing the CQB component with the AN-PVS17 NVD mounted on the S.I.R.*

receivers are those that use the standard removable carrying handle. In addition to Colt, Mil-Std. makers include Armalite, Bushmaster, KMC and possibly others.

Two variants of the S.I.R. System will be offered; one that is dedicated, requiring the removal of the delta ring, spring assembly, and one that is cut to clear the ring. While the first was designed with the military in mind, the second was conceived for the private sector including law enforcement.

Invented by Mr. Richard Swan, of A.R.M.S., Inc., the patent protected S.I.R. System is the perfected version of the Rigid Frame concept that Swan has been secretly developing for more than a decade. Like Gene Stoner and Jim Sullivan, Swan is a 1960s veteran arms designer and was the Senior Weapons Technician for Colt's Military Research & Development Division.

Mounting rigidly onto the M1913 Picatinny rail on the flattop receiver, the

of the rail to form the top handguard. Made of an undisclosed super strong aircraft alloy, the system is not only rigid, but does not touch the barrel in any way. Only the S.I.R. System provides perfect alignment between the receiver and all four mounting rails, something vital for mounting long eye relief optics and lasers.

If the barrel and S.I.R. System are squeezed together the barrel will flex about 1/8" until the front handguard cap contacts the S.I.R. housing, but the S.I.R. will not move. In fact, the S.I.R. will support 150 pounds on top of its rail even with its supporting lower handguard removed. Even running over the weapon with a vehicle may bend the forward section of the barrel, but the S.I.R. System will remain usable.

Rigidly attached to the S.I.R.'s upper handguard portion via an interrupted rail is the lower handguard that is made of an extremely strong but lightweight synthetic. By simply

talk about. Nevertheless, in addition to the requirements already outlined, I can give you some idea about the capabilities of the rifle of the future. For example, by using special laser technology, a friendly soldier will be instantly identified to prevent friendly fire, and "friendly" fire accounts for an average of 30% of U.S. military casualties.

Through the use of a tiny printed circuit board, the number of shots fired, hits made, & etc. can be instantly communicated via satellite to a central command center. A new retractable buttstock will house a super battery that will power any electronic accessories for extended periods of time, and so on.

How heavy is the S.I.R. System? After receiving a sample of the two latest pre-production versions, I carefully compared them with the parts they replace. On the military style, these parts are the carrying handle, the handguards, the barrel-mounted front sling swivel and the delta handguard retainer, its spring and clip. The total weight of these parts on my scale is 18.3 oz. The weight of my sample military type S.I.R. System with its rear sight is 22.2 oz. or about 4 oz. heavier.

The other version of the S.I.R. System is designed for use on a carbine that retains the delta ring assembly even though the ring no longer has a function. Envisioned for use with the private sector and law enforcement, this version does not require the removal of the delta ring. However, because of occasional requirements in procurement, the Military is also interested in this version.

### The CQB Component

By simply pushing out both upper receiver pins the basic weapon instantly becomes mission specific. Although I had tested a proof of concept version of the SOCOM's basic Enhanced Carbine, I had neither seen the Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Receiver component (#4 above), nor did I have any additional information on it until recently. As this is written, the CQB component being tested consists of an M4A3 flattop upper receiver mated with a short barrel as used on the XM177E2 (CAR-15). Since such a unit is not currently offered, SOCOM has built it from parts. Barrel lengths of 10 and 11.5 inches are being tested with the CQB component. Late information is that the 10-inch barrel CQB component is favored, especially by the U.S. Navy SEALs. However, the 10-inch barrel M16 has traditionally had reliability problems.

In order to test this latest CQB component with the S.I.R. System, I went to Bushmaster. After I explained the project Bushmaster made three 11.5-inch barrels to spec. and assemble them onto M1913 Mil-Std A3 type flattop upper receivers. Bushmaster is one of only a few companies that makes a flattop upper receiver to exact M1913 Picatinny standards, and this was critical in being able to mount the S.I.R. System.

### Accessories

After removing the delta ring assembly from one of the Bushmaster 11.5-

inch barrel upper groups, I assembled the military style S.I.R. System on the upper receiver with no difficulty. I then installed the new law enforcement/civilian version onto another unit with the delta ring left intact. This S.I.R. also assembled with no difficulty. On the Picatinny rail attached to the bottom of the handguard of the military style S.I.R. I attached an A.R.M.S. #23 Throw Lever Vertical Foregrip, and on the law enforcement version I mounted the new SureFire M900A Tactical Foregrip Weapon Light.

In addition to its powerful main light, this unit comes standard with dual blue LED lights to illuminate the way to a point of entry without giving one's presence away with bright light. These LED lights can also be had in other colors, and the M900A is available with an invisible infrared IR lens for use with night vision goggles. As with all the other accessories the M900A was equipped with the A.R.M.S. Throw Lever mounting system. I also mounted the ERGO Grip from S.C. Hines Co. on one of the guns, as this grip is being tested by SOCOM, and I tested the Giles Tactical Sling from Wilderness Tactical Products.

From the start the superiority of the S.I.R. System over all other candidate systems I've seen was apparent. Not only is the component extremely rigid, but it is also equally ergonomic. All accessories mounted easily and locked rigidly onto the S.I.R.'s M1913 rails including the new EOTech Model 551 Holographic sight and Kimber's brand new Reflex sight.

Being night vision compatible, the red reticle EOTech Model 551 has many other features and is also water proof to 60 feet. Powered by fiber optics and tritium, Kimber's Meprolight Reflex Sight projects an amber sighting dot and is not dependent on batteries. In addition to these optics, the Aimpoint Comp ML was tested on the S.I.R. CQB component. However, as good as these sights performed, it was the system's affect on live fire about which I was most curious.

### Night Vision

As with the basic Enhanced (M4A1) Carbine, the CQB component accepts the W1000 Thermal Imager from Raytheon Corp., and virtually all other current NATO STANAG night vision devices (NVD). Just before this article was to go to print, I was able to acquire the U.S. Military's newest NVDs, the

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**EOTech**, Dept. SOF  
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**Kimber**, Dept. SOF  
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**Mounting Solutions Plus**, Dept. SOF  
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Miami, FL 33197  
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**Precision Reflex, Inc.**, Dept. SOF  
201 N. Main St.  
New Bremen, OH 45869  
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**S.C. Hines Co. (ERGO Grip)**, Dept. SOF  
POB 1060  
Tijeras, NM 87059  
(877) 281-3783

**SureFire, Inc.**, Dept. SOF  
18300 Mt. Baldy Cir.  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708  
(800) 828-8809

**Wilderness Tactical Products, Inc.**  
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5120 N. 19th Ave., #7  
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AN-PVS17 and AN-PVS18 along with their new A.R.M.S. mounts. Made by Litton Ind., these NVDs are marketed by Night Vision Equipment Co. (Excalibur), of Pennsylvania.

Of 2.25 magnification, the standard 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation AN-PVS17 used by the Army is capable of identification and accurate shot placement out to 400 yards and beyond at night. A 4.5 magnification version is supplied to the Marine Corps and either model can be supplied to the Military with 4<sup>th</sup> Generation technology. The new A.R.M.S. AN-PVS17 mount is made by Precision Reflex, of Ohio, and is also marketed by Mounting Solutions Plus, of Florida.

Used in conjunction with the Aimpoint Comp M red dot sight, the AN-PVS18 monocular NVD is not only smaller than the current AN-PVS14, but has more features. Its brand new A.R.M.S. #29 mount contains a Q.D. #983 master ring that also mates with the PVS18's headset. Thus, the user can instantly remove the monocular NVD from its weapon mount, and attach it to a head set for use with a PEQ2 IR laser at night. Up to now a closely guarded secret, the S.I.R. system has been specially designed to house the PEQ2 by removing and reversing the front portion of the rail. This mounting system is seen here for the first time. The PEQ2 IR laser is available only to military and law enforcement.

### Shots Fired

Using automatic fire we purposely ran five 30-round magazines through the S.I.R. equipped CQB M4 in rapid succession. Such tests conducted by the Military have resulted in damage to weapons equipped with other systems from overheating. Although the barrels of both our CQB components became VERY hot, the S.I.R. System remained cool, because it doesn't touch the barrel. All who fired the S.I.R. equipped M4 felt that the system enhanced controllability, especially when using one of the vertical foregrips.

In the accuracy department the CQB components proved capable of about 2 MOA accuracy with high quality ammunition when fired using the reflex sights. Using a Burris 6X Mini Scope mounted on A.R.M.S. Throw Lever Rings increased this accuracy about 25% in our CQB sample using Hornady 75 gr. .223 Match ammunition. In general performance, one of our three CQB component upper receiver units did not reliably eject

some foreign surplus 5.56x45mm ammunition even with its 11.5" barrel. At 7000 feet elevation muzzle velocity averaged about 2500 fps with 55 gr. bullets and about 2400 with 75 gr. bullets.

Although the status of the S.I.R. System with the USSOCOM is not public information, I have copies of USSOCOM User Assessment reports comparing the S.I.R. System with others being tested. All strongly favor the S.I.R. System with a number of minor modifications. Although the S.I.R. has patent pending status, it is still in final development, subtle modifications are likely to be made prior to full production.

As good as the S.I.R. System we tested is, it is one of only a handful of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation proof of concept models, several of which are still being tested by the USSOCOM. Although what you see here is about 90% finalized on the outside, it is only 75% finalized on its interior. Later this year the final versions of the S.I.R. System should be in production, and will be compatible with any Mil-Std flattop AR-15 type carbine using standard carbine length handguards including the short barreled CQB types tested here.

### A Pistol Caliber Component

Though the #3 component, the Over The Breech Receiver (OTBR), lacks details, SOCOM requires that this be a pistol caliber conversion. Thus, I installed the law enforcement version of the S.I.R. System on Gemtech's ultra quiet suppressed Talon flattop upper receiver group. A dedicated suppressed 9mm component for the Colt 9mm SMG, this upgrade amounts to an AR-15 type counterpart of the H&K MP5-SD. Although the Talon is not currently a part of the SOCOM SOPMOD, the S.I.R. System works with it with minor modification.

In addition to military units, the CQB component of the Enhanced Carbine Program may prove valuable to law enforcement, and the S.I.R. System will prove valuable to many users of AR-15 style carbines. Will the S.I.R. be for everyone? Certainly not. Some will not perceive a need for the system and others may not be able to afford it. However, for those who want the best, the S.I.R. System may be indispensable. For information on this and all its Mil-Std M1913 components, contact A.R.M.S., Inc., Dept. GW/LE, 230 West Center St., West Bridgewater, MA 02379, (508) 584-7816. ☒

### An Embarrassment To His Sponsors

The increasingly blatant criminal misconduct on the part of the Mugabe regime against the citizens — of African or European ancestry — is becoming an unbearable embarrassment to the internationalists without whose support the Mugabe regime would have had no chance of a successful "war of liberation." That it was international pressure in the form of embargoes on the Rhodesian government and lavish assistance to the "liberation" movement from without the country that led to the defeat of the Rhodesian government is without doubt. That early on most parties in the new Zimbabwean nation worked together to build a new and functional society is also a verity. But an unpleasant fact that can no longer be ignored by the world community is that the regime of President Robert Mugabe is incompetent, immoral, totalitarian, racist and beyond redemption.

In an hour when international terrorism is of international concern, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has employed an incredibly crude but total terrorism for the subjugation of his own people in a desperate bid to stay in power. His bastardization of a land reform agenda has been used as a means to divide and conquer — as opposed to its stated purpose of uniting and serving — the people he purports to govern.

The overriding pity of the situation is that, in this desperate attempt of an incompetent and corrupt government to hold on to power, there are no foreseeable winners. The same national assets Mugabe would destroy by placing them in the hands of his supporters who have to idea how to utilize them, are the very assets Zimbabwe must have for its national survival. The nation once one of the most prosperous in Africa, is now essentially bankrupt. The criminal conduct of its government is making it impossible for even Zimbabwe's most generous supporters to justify aid, even to those who need it most or might put it to good use. As we write this, commonwealth nations are discussing the matter of further aid of any kind to the Mugabe regime, and the consensus is not favorable.

*A retired educator, Ed DeMund immigrated to Rhodesia in the 1960s, and emigrated from Zimbabwe to Canada in the 1990s. He now works as an investigative reporter. ☒*

## Network Of Terror

Continued from page 39

support from Iran and logistical help from Syria.

### Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

The PFLP is a Marxist-Leninist group founded in 1967 by George Habash as a member of the PLO. It joined the Alliance of Palestinian Forces (APF) to oppose the Declaration of Principles signed in 1993 and suspended participation in the PLO. It broke away from the APF, along with the DFLP, in 1996 over ideological differences. It took part in meetings with Arafat's Fatah party and PLO representatives in 1999 to discuss national unity and the reinvigoration of the PLO, but continues to oppose current negotiations with Israel.

With an estimated current strength of 800, the PFLP has committed numerous international terrorist attacks during the 1970s. Since 1978 it has conducted attacks against Israeli or moderate Arab targets, including killing a settler and her son in December 1996. Receiving external aid from Syria via safe-havens and logistics, the PFLP operates in Lebanon, Israel, and the occupied territories.

### Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC)

The PFLP-GC Split from the PFLP in 1968, claiming it wanted to focus more on fighting and less on politics, and is violently opposed to Arafat's PLO. Led by Ahmad Jabril, a former captain in the Syrian Army, it is closely tied to both Syria and Iran. It has carried out dozens of attacks in Europe and the Middle East during 1970s-80s. The PFLP-GC is known for cross-border terrorist attacks into Israel using unusual means, such as hot-air balloons and motorized hang gliders. Its primary focus is now on guerrilla operations in southern Lebanon, small-scale attacks in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip.

Headquartered in Damascus with bases in Lebanon, it receives logistical and military support from Syria, and financial support from Iran.

Appreciation is expressed to the U.S. Department of State for assistance in preparing this manuscript.

John Phillips is a military and technical historian and former NATO police official, now a consultant on counter-terrorism and security matters. ✕

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## Holy War Combat War

Continued from page 55

40 meters away. I told Jalat that it was *mezdeek* (near). But he just shook his head and said *dur* (far). Laughing, I ran over to the school. Our 82 was blasting the second floor and a communist machine gunner started firing wildly from the roof. My position was exposed to enemy fire, so I moved to the front of the building — just in time to receive mujahideen machine-gun fire.

Bullets plastered the windows above me while glass and masonry rained down on my head. I yelled "Allah Akbar!" to warn them that I was down-range. I started firing into the basement windows when I heard a voice calling "Ahmad? Ahmad?" (my Afghan nom de guerre). It was Jalat. We were both firing into the compound when Jalat saw a bicycle leaning against the wall. He began to shoot it full of holes, but suddenly stopped and tried to repair the damage, wearing an expression like, "God, what have I done?" I couldn't stop laughing.

Voices called out from the building that they wanted to surrender. Six of them came out to the porch begging us

not to kill them. As we searched them, I saw another one still in the doorway with an AK. Aiming at his chest, I told him to throw down his weapon. He didn't. I would have shot him then and there but I could see by his manner that he wanted to surrender. Maybe he just couldn't understand my lousy Farsi. I grabbed his weapon and turned him and the others over to some mujahideen who had entered the compound.

### Friendly Fire

Firing our weapons, Jalat and I rushed into the building. We cleared all the rooms on the first floor and then went down to the basement, where we captured one man hiding in a closet. I ran upstairs alone. I cleared rooms for about a minute when someone started firing up the stairs from the first floor. Luckily they missed. It was Abdul Ahmad. He's a good man and was embarrassed at his mistake. Since I wasn't hit, I wasn't angry.

From the second floor I could see two brand new Toyota land cruisers in the back. I told Abdul to take them or blow them up. He said he would handle it. Downstairs, I found a room full of communists training films. No one wanted to take them as *gannymat*, so I

tried to destroy as many as possible. Unfortunately, I didn't have any grenades and was only able to destroy a few.

Loaded down with captured AKs and .303s, we ran down the street, leading out 10 prisoners tied with turbans. An enemy 12.7mm started to fire tracers down the center of the road the mujahideen in front of me tried to get skinny in a doorway. I told him to keep moving. All we had to do is turn the corner at the end of the block. We made it.

Back at the committee I found that the mujahideen didn't take the trucks because they couldn't get them started. This was disappointing, but all in all it was a good attack. The school was burning and we had 10 prisoners, eight rifles and a 7.62mm machine gun. We had no casualties and everyone was bragging how brave they were. I didn't know what the future held.

But for now I was having a helluva good time.

*In next months' Part II, Scoft repeatedly finds himself in harm's way, accompanying the mujahideen unit into battle after battle, before packing his kit and venturing "back to the world."* ✖

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— **Tony Vourax, member of Team Prozak**

## The Battle For Kabul

Continued from page 47

— not wearing — and which had been torn open by a round squarely in the back. He was white and his voice shaking and rapid-fire: “Man, you don’t want to head up there. It’s fucking crazy ... I was pinned down, I couldn’t see where the fire was coming from but every time I moved someone would open up on me. I was pissing myself.” The American Special Forces guys, he said, were still up in the upper-story of a house near the road directing in air strikes. Though by now the front-line situation was so fluid that air strikes had evidently ceased: there was too great a danger of hitting advancing UF troops.

Shortly after, the Guards armored unit earlier pulled over on the highway began moving past the command post, circumventing the container block with a wide loop along the track through Rabat and then swinging back towards the Old Road. With scores of troops gathered in front of the farmhouse now clambering aboard trucks ready to move out, it was time for a decision. It didn’t take long. Thirty seconds later I was aboard a pick-up crammed with troops

and choking on the dust of the T-55s ahead we were on our way to Kabul.

The half-hour after we rolled across the front lines into Talib territory will be difficult to forget. Crouched on the back of a pick up behind the tanks, it all seemed just too good to be true. The first lines were broken, Talib bunkers and strong points in ruined farmhouses empty or manned only by corpses. UF infantry was now streaming through, mopping up with bursts of automatic fire. One UF soldiers lay by the road side groaning, hit by a bullet, while a heavily bearded foreigner probably in his 40s was being frog-marched to a jeep as UF troops attempted to push their way through the melee to land a few punches on the wretched man. Other POWs were less lucky: they were shot on the spot. This was pay-back time.

But somewhere there had to be a second line or at least an ambush party. Moving in slow convoy through positions that had not been properly secured seemed like madness, and this being Afghanistan, probably was. But eerily as we rolled south across an open, blitzed landscape we took no fire. A few farm houses were still standing but what trees were still standing had been shredded and the fields were a wasteland, result of

by Taliban scorched earth tactics and weeks of U.S. bombing. Here and there on and beside the road lay the charred skeletons of vehicles and huge craters, 10 feet and more deep, gouged out by 1,000 kg bombs from US strikes. On the mountainside to our west a village was blazing fiercely in the fast fading light. Ahead, sporadic bursts of tracer arched skywards punctuated by the dirty black puffs of exploding RPG rounds.

Slowly the realization sank in: The enemy was in full retreat and there simply was no second line. That translated into a headlong advance as jeeps, pick-up and trucks began overtaking the armor and pushing on faster to Qarabagh. We arrived amid the ruins as darkness was falling around 1730. The enemy had gone but the road was jammed with vehicles and exuberant troops milling about embracing and slapping one another on the back. The village, went the word, would be secured that night and the advance towards Kabul resumed in the morning.

Next month, SOF enters the city amid a dangerous power vacuum.

Mike Winchester is a frequent contributor. ✕



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# Sound Off

BY COL. DAVID H. HACKWORTH (RET.)

## Time To Chop Off The Snake's Head

Now that Round One of our war against terrorism — Afghanistan — is about 80% over, the generals should be positioning forces for Round Two.

There's scuttlebutt aplenty about which country's next: Somalia, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, the Palestinian Authority or Iraq. Like the now-defeated Taliban's Afghanistan, the contenders are all training grounds for terrorists and major exporters of this particularly reprehensible form of warfare. Snake pits of hate that — as our president has articulated so well — must be defanged before we in the civilized world can even begin to contemplate getting back to our way of life.

Happy days might be here again a lot sooner if Saddam Hussein was moved to the top of the terrorist hit list. While our fight shouldn't be with the people of Iraq — who have been tortured by this certified war criminal for the past 20 years — the head of the most dangerous state among the meanest of company needs to be knocked off next.

When you get into a barroom fight, you take out the baddest dude first. Check out Saddam's track record: He used poison gas against Iran and his own people; he has huge stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction — bugs and gas and maybe nukes; and insiders say his death factories are churning out more.

If that's not justification enough to punch out his lights, high-ranking Iraqi defectors say (and U.S. intelligence confirms) that his prints have been on all the terrorist strikes against the USA since Stormin' Norman stumped him, including running a terrorist training camp for members of Osama bin Laden's gang and other major players, complete with a mock-up of a 707 for some hands-on hijack simulation. A U.S. intelligence source told me it will soon be conclusively proven that he was a key player in the assaults on our embassies, our overseas military personnel, World Trade Center I and II and some of the anthrax attacks that have been coming down since Sept. 11.

Now George W. Bush has laid down the gauntlet to Saddam: U.N. arms inspectors must be allowed to return immediately to Iraq and continue the WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) inspections agreed to after Desert Storm. The Master of Miscalculation says there's no way this is going to happen.

But most European and Arab leaders are against our tak-



ing out Saddam. The Europeans are worried about their gas tanks, pocketbooks and pacifists, while the Arabs paint us as a bully picking on one of theirs as an excuse for their own political instability.

Well, let them come to New York City and visit our WTC national wound, where 4,000 civilians were having their first cup of coffee on the day they were fiendishly murdered. Let the politicians and peaceniks in Paris and Berlin sit on their hands and wag their diplomatic tongues as they did for years when ex-Yugoslavia was burning. Let them appease Saddam — as they did Adolf Hitler — while this century's mustached madman builds his

nuclear, biological and chemical weapons arsenal, financed with the smuggled oil that runs their cars and factories.

We didn't take out the Soviets because of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction), and we were lucky that the Evil Empire imploded before one of theirs — or ours — pressed the button in an insane moment and turned planet Earth into a radiated ash pit.

We cannot allow Saddam to have such power.

Employing the operational methods we used in Afghanistan — Air, Special Ops and limited conventional forces, but with an infinitely bigger sledgehammer — and the help of old and new foxhole pals along with the Iraqi exiles and Kurdish militias, we should clean his clock with similar dispatch. Then, as with Afghanistan, the people of Iraq will finally be free to rise up and reclaim their country.

Clearly Saddam represents our most clear and present danger. You either stop terrorism or it will stop you. We must put Saddam and all other terrorists down or suffer the fate of Israel, a terrorist punching bag for 53 years.

Taking out the Taliban and then Saddam's evil regime should cause other states to reconsider if they really want to bear the consequences of being in the terror business when Uncle Sam is on a roll.

<http://www.hackworth.com> is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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Hackworth's novel, *The Price of Honor*, is now available. ✕

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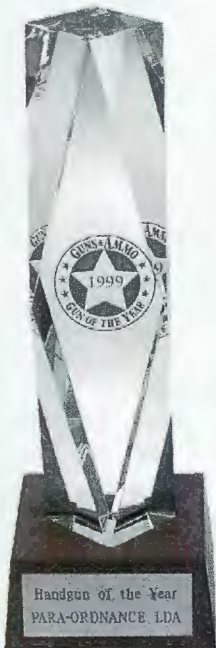
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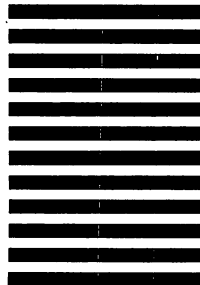
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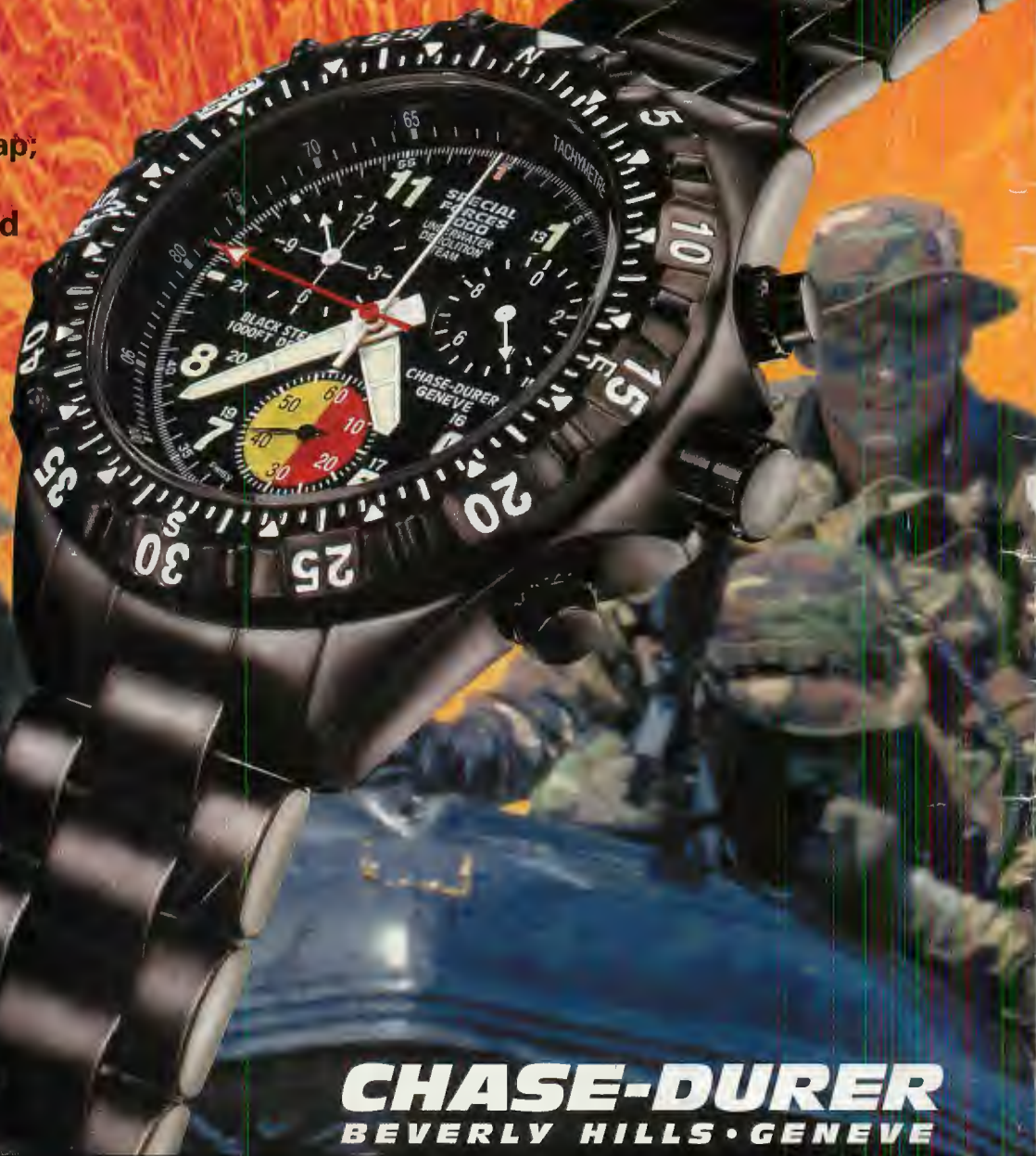
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